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CHRISTIANITY

AND

EVOLUTION:

MODERN PROBLEMS OF THE FAITH.

BY THE REVS.

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PREFACE.

THESE Papers, which appeared in the *Homiletic Magazine* during 1886–87, it has been thought advisable to republish. Not professing to cover the entire field of debate between Faith and Science, they will, we trust, nevertheless be found sufficiently representative of the spirit and temper in which Christian thinkers seek to deal with the problems to which the progress of modern thought and life is ever giving rise. They are in the nature of an Eirenikon; and in order to this it was not essential that the writers should occupy an absolutely identical standpoint with respect to the great question of Evolution: all that was required of them was a conviction that acceptance of the ascertained facts of Evolution is not incompatible with a genuine, intelligent

Christian Faith. Although, therefore, a general agreement will be found to exist throughout the series, one or two of the writers have made no secret of their holding a much more limited view of the scope and character of Evolution than that represented by the rest. Should exception be taken to this circumstance, we would respectfully submit, that in the settlement of great vital questions it must tend in a much higher degree to healthy, thorough, and impartial discussion when debaters are left perfectly free in everything save the essentials of the point at issue. In the hope that the following pages may be found helpful by many whose spirits are shadowed by the scepticism of the age, we now commit them to the judgment of earnest and thoughtful men.

FREDK. HASTINGS,
A. F. MUIR,
Editors of the "Homiletic Magazine."

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CHRISTIANITY AND EVOLUTION.

I.

EVOLUTION IN RELATION TO MIRACLE.

By the Rev. GEORGE MATHESON, M.A., D.D.

IN the spring of 1885 I published a work with this title, "Can the Old Faith live with the New?" It was confessedly the attempt at a harmony between the science of the nineteenth century and the theology of the past. As such it was opposed to the fire of two opposing camps, between which it sought to rest—the camp of the scientific materialist, who denied the right to look beyond Nature, and the camp of the conservative dogmatist, who denied the right to desert the forms of old tradition. It was sometimes represented as a book of the old school of theology, sometimes as an effort to advocate the claims of religious liberalism. It must be confessed that the severest criticisms it

received were from the side of religious conservatism. It was nowhere maintained to be at variance with scientific fact, but it was more than once assailed as inimical to the popular religious view. The point in which it was thought to be most at variance with that view was on the subject of the miraculous. Within a month after its appearance it was assailed by two critics on the ground of its opposition to the commonly-received doctrine of the supernatural. One of these critics asserted that I had practically excluded the possibility of a miracle by admitting that evolution implied the sequence of a chain. The other took exception to my attempt to distinguish between the violation of a law and the transcendence of a law, and declared the distinction to be without a difference. My own opinion is that this part of my work was not expressed with sufficient clearness nor dwelt upon at adequate length. I was so bent on the design of establishing a harmony between the possible results of modern speculation and the traditional doctrines of Christian revelation, that I did not sufficiently take into account another element of the question. I did not sufficiently consider that the main difficulty does not lie in the doctrines, but in the alleged mode in which these doctrines have been communicated, and that until this fundamental

question be settled, there can be no solution of the problem whether revelation can subsist with science.

Accordingly, I have not unwillingly accepted an invitation from the editors of this series of essays to supplement and elucidate the point which my book has left comparatively untouched. I have accepted it not in any spirit of controversy, and still less with the design of defending the doctrine of evolution, but simply and solely in pursuance of the plan which led to the writing of the work, "Can the Old Faith live with the New?"

Our subject is the relation of evolution to miracle. It clearly divides itself into two parts. On one side it touches the domain of religion, on the other the sphere of science. There are two ideas which have to be separately considered — the idea of miracle and the idea of evolution. The most difficult task in the solution of any problem is the task of definition; and the controversies arising from disputed problems would be greatly minimised if men could agree beforehand as to the sense in which each combatant used the words in dispute. Accordingly, I propose to make the chief part of this paper a matter of definition, an explanation of the meaning we attach to the terms of the question. We shall first consider the signification

of the word "miracle," in the Christian sense of the term, and we shall afterwards investigate the meaning of the word "evolution," in the scientific sense of the term.

What, then, is the Christian's sense of the word "miracle"? In former times it was popularly used to denote the violation of a law of the universe by the mandate of an absolute will. There are still a few who pertinaciously adhere to this definition, and their zeal increases in intensity in proportion as the extent of their numbers diminishes. It seems at first sight as if their position were one of special reverence. They ask us if we do not believe in the existence of a Supreme Will, exalted over visible Nature. They ask us if, holding such a belief, we shall refuse to assign to that will the right and prerogative of breaking through the course of Nature. If we should refuse to see the highest Divine prerogative in such a violation of law, they demand by what authority we dethrone God from His absolute empire, by what right we limit within the domain of law that will which we have already conceded to be paramount over the visible universe.

Now, plausible as this language undoubtedly is, it is founded upon a mistake. It is built upon an error as to the true source of Christian reverence. As believers in Christianity, we all hold that the

will of God reigns paramount over the visible universe; in other words, that in relation to the visible universe the will of God is an ultimate fact beyond which there can be no appeal. But while we hold that the will of God is an ultimate fact in relation to the visible universe, we do not hold that it is ultimate in relation to God Himself. We believe that the Divine will has something behind it—a Divine Nature, or, which is the same thing, a law of Divine being. Our reason for believing this, as Christians, is the simple fact that we are taught by Christianity to think of man as made in the image of God, and that we have learned from human experience that this is the nature of man. Our will is only the expression of our nature; it is not the first but the last stage in the process of human character. Every act which I perform, every resolution which I make, every choice which I elect to follow, is the latest result of a law of my being, and is determined by that law. Looking upon ourselves as made in the image of God, we are constrained to regard the Divine will as standing in a precisely similar relation. Every Christian will repudiate the notion that in worshipping his God he is worshipping an arbitrary will. Is it right that a man should pray, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven"? We must answer, It depends

on the meaning he attaches to the word "Thy." What is his conception of that God whose will he desires to be done? Does he regard Him as a Moloch, as a crushing power, as a being whose sole desire is the aggrandizement of himself? Then there is no virtue in the prayer, "Thy will be done;" it is really a prayer for the establishment of selfishness. But does he look upon the being to whom he prays as already in possession of a law of life which impels Him to do good? Does he regard His will as a "good, acceptable, and perfect will"— in other words, as something which is determined by a nature of absolute purity? Then his prayer for the performance of that will is itself an expression of the highest Christian love, and an evidence of participation in the spiritual purity which he seeks to evoke.

But now what does all this mean? Nothing less than this, that not will but law is the ultimate fact of the universe. If the will of God be only an expression of the nature of God, and if the nature of God be but another phrase for the law of His being, it follows inevitably that the universe ultimately rests, not upon the mandates of an arbitrary will, but upon the basis of a steadfast, fixed, invariable law — so steadfast and invariable as to justify the application of the words: "Heaven and

earth may pass away, but my word shall not pass away."

Are we prepared to take the next step in the reasoning out of this problem? It is very clear and very unavoidable. We have seen that the will of God is not the ultimate fact of the universe, that behind this will there dwells a law of Divine being which gives it its existence and determines its movements. We have seen that this law of Divine being, just because it is Divine, must be permanent; it is itself the ultimate fact, and, therefore, it must be the eternal and unchanging fact. The inference from this is immediate and irresistible; there can be no such thing as an absolute miracle. To believe in the existence of an absolute miracle would be to believe in the existence of something existing behind the nature of God, which could violate the law of God; it would be, therefore, tantamount not to the expression of reverence, but to the assertion of atheism. Whatever definition, therefore, we assign to the word "miracle," it can only be a relative definition. Our Christian belief demands that we should deny the possibility of a violation of ultimate law, in other words, of the law of God's being; this is only, in different terms, to say that in the sight of God, and from the standpoint of the Divine nature, nothing can be miraculous. That which is

abnormal to the man may be strictly normal to the angel, and that which is supernatural to the angel must be very natural indeed to the Father of spirits. A miracle can only exist in relation to certain spheres of being; there can be no absolute violation of universal law.

Is there then any other definition which we can give of a miracle, any definition which will preserve the idea of the supernatural without destroying our reverence for the majesty of Divine law? It seems to me that there is, and I shall now proceed briefly to define and defend it. I should define a miracle in the Christian sense to be the initial stage of that process by which a lower law is transcended by a higher law. Let us consider this definition in detail. It comprehends two questions: What is meant by the transcendence of a lower by a higher law? and, What is meant by the initial stage of that process?

The first question will, I think, be best answered by an illustration. When I lift my foot in order to walk, I have come into a certain relation to the law of gravity. What is that relation? The natural position of my foot ought clearly to be the ground, that is to say, if the idea of mind be excluded, there is no reason in the world why it should not rest on the ground and rest there for ever; the law of

gravitation imperatively demands it. But let the element of mind be introduced and there enters a change of conditions which entirely alters the original state of things. In lifting my foot from the ground I have modified the original law of gravitation, so far as the foot is concerned. I have not violated the law, I have not even suspended it; it still continues to exist and to operate in its own sphere. But I have myself come into contact with another and a higher sphere, a sphere in which the old material conditions do not apply, and in which the law of these conditions is no longer in force. The principle of mind or of vitality has been stronger than the original form of the law of gravitation, and has enabled me to transcend that form. Transcendence is, in fact, the only word which can legitimately be applied to the process. There has been no interference, strictly speaking, with the original law of Nature—that law is still left in possession of its material sphere. What has happened is that an element once included in that sphere has been lifted into a new and upper region, whereby it has been rendered comparatively independent of the influences which formerly dominated it.

But here I anticipate an objection. It may be said, Your very illustration refutes your own

theory. It proves too much. If accepted as the legitimate instance of a miracle, it would annihilate the distinction between miracles and everyday events. You say that in lifting your foot from the ground you are transcending the materialistic form of the law of gravitation; granted, are you then performing a miracle? Do you suppose that in this simple act you are doing anything supernatural; if not, where is your definition? Has not your own illustration proved that the mere transcendence of a lower law by a higher law does not contain in itself that sense of supernatural power which is necessary to the very idea of miracle?

Now to this I answer, What my critic says is true, and I never supposed it to be otherwise than true. It is because I have foreseen the inevitableness and the justice of such a criticism that I have not defined a miracle to be the transcendence of a lower by a higher law; I have purposely inserted a qualifying clause. A miracle is not the transcendence of a lower by a higher law, but it is the initial stage in that process of transcendence. The lifting of my foot from the ground is not a miracle to me, but why? because I am already in natural possession of the power by which this is done. But let us take an imaginary case. Let us suppose that

no living creature had hitherto ever possessed the power to lift either the hand or foot; in other words, that the hands and feet of all living creatures had hitherto been forced to obey the same principle of gravity, which in the absence of disturbing causes keeps a material object rivetted to its place. Let us further suppose that to one individual of the human species there had for the first time come that power which had hitherto been denied to all forms human or animal, that for the first time a being possessed of the hand and the foot had manifested the ability to lift these organs from their position of natural gravity; what name would the associates of this favoured being give to such a manifestation? Could they call it anything else than a miracle? If they saw their comrade for the first time in history begin to walk on the ground, in what respect would their impression of the miraculous differ from that impression which men now have when they hear of Christ walking on the sea? We now look upon walking on the ground as a perfectly natural occurrence, but that is simply because the initial stage of the process is past. The law which was once transcendent has become normal and natural. Is there anything absurd in the notion that if our mental development were complete, we should find the

process of walking on the sea to be as reconcilable with science as the process of walking on the ground. The hope of every Christian is that he shall one day see face to face and know even as he is known; what is this but to believe that there is a time coming in which the things now called supernatural shall be found to have been strictly according to Nature, and when the seeming violations of physical law shall be recognised to have been only the fulfilment of the law of the spirit of life?

We have now looked at the subject on its religious side. We have defined and defended the Christian sense of the word "miracle." We come next to the scientific side of the subject; we have to define the meaning of the word "evolution." In this latter case we stand in a different position from that occupied in the previous instance. The Bible has nowhere defined the meaning of the word "miracle," and, therefore, we require to make a definition; but science has defined the meaning of the word "evolution," and, therefore, we are here under no such necessity. In reasoning with the evolutionist we have no right to take any definition except that which he himself has given; we must meet him on his own ground. Accordingly I shall accept here the definition of the word

"evolution" as given by its leading apostle, Mr. Herbert Spencer. He says, "Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion, during which the matter passes from an indefinite incoherent homogeneity to a definite coherent heterogeneity, and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation."

Let me at the outset direct attention to a peculiarity in this definition, which so far as known to me has not hitherto been noticed. I allude to the fact that Mr. Spencer, in defining the process of evolution, has never once used any expression which would indicate his ascription to that process of a material agency. He does not say that evolution is produced by any physical cause; he limits himself entirely to the description of a material effect. He says that matter is integrated, but he nowhere affirms how it is integrated. He says that while matter is being integrated, motion is being dissipated; but he does not affirm that there is any causal connection between the two; he studiously confines himself to the assertion of the fact of their co-existence, and therefore he designedly employs the word "concomitant." He declares that while matter is being integrated and motion dissipated there is going on the transition from the homogeneous into the heterogeneous, but here again he

declines to commit himself to the position that the one process is the cause of the other, and contents himself with declaring that the one process takes place *during* the other. This caution on the part of Mr. Spencer is no mere timidity; it is the result of a scientific conviction which has found expression again and again throughout his writings. If he refuses to declare that evolution is a material process, it is because he does not believe it to be a material process. The world as we see it and know it is with him a manifestation, not a manifestor; an effect, not a cause. He declines to say that the process is one which is effected by the inherent power of matter, because he does not believe that matter has an absolutely inherent power. Behind the manifestations of matter he recognises the presence of a law whose nature he confesses to be unknown, a law pervading and permeating all things, yet itself inscrutable; determining the motions of all change, yet itself unchangeable; present in the dissolution of all forms, yet itself persistent. This inscrutable law, this abiding force, this changeless presence, is Mr. Spencer's synonym for God; he calls it the Unknowable. Yet, however unknowable it be, it demands precisely the same amount of faith as is required for the belief of the theist, and involves the same supernatural necessities which the

belief of the theist implies. Here is an absolute law, or transcendental power, which, scientifically speaking, is precisely analogous to that absolute law or power which the Christian recognises at the basis of all things. If we accept this doctrine of the modern apostle of evolution we shall be led to an irresistible conclusion. Whatever difficulties may attach to the reconciliation of evolution with miracle, they do not lie at the *head* of the chain. At the head of the chain, Mr. Spencer being judge, there is something which is not evolved because it is perfectly persistent. If it be unknowable, on that very account it cannot be known to be impersonal. Science, by admitting that at the head of the evolutionary chain there exists an unknowable region, has thereby left a margin open to the flight of faith. Christian faith may, without the charge of being unscientific, take possession of this vacant field, and continue to hold possession of it until science, or some other power, may be able to claim it as its own.

But let us advance a step further. We have arrived at the conclusion, by the concessions of science herself, that whatever difficulty lies in the co-existence of evolution with miracle, does not lie at the head of the chain. We have now to ask if it lies in the middle of the chain. The question is:

Is it scientifically possible that this absolute law which the Christian assumes to be a mental law should from time to time so manifest itself in the affairs of Nature as to transcend the lower or physical law? And here let me put a subsidiary question, the answer to which lies within the range of human experience. It is this: Would the chain of physical evolution have been the same if there had never existed in the world the phenomena of life and of mind? If the material chain of Nature had never been supplemented by those links which we call mental, would it have exhibited to a spectator to-day the same aspect which it exhibits to us? The answer from all sides will be, No. There is not even a materialist who would for a moment deny that the introduction of life and mind into the chain of material Nature has completely altered that course which material Nature would have taken without the introduction of these things. It is true, the materialist contends that what we call life and mind were originally themselves produced by the chain of material Nature, but that is not the question. We are not here inquiring how they were produced; we are seeking in the meantime common ground between all opponents. We take our stand on the admitted fact that mind is mind *now*, however it came to be mind. Standing

on the basis of that fact there is one question, and one alone, which is pertinent to the present inquiry —the question whether the presence of mind in the world has altered that condition of things which would have been produced in its absence by the mere mechanical laws of Nature. We repeat that on this subject there will be no divergence of opinion. Mr. G. H. Lewes, whom nobody will suspect of a partiality for spiritualism, has not scrupled to declare that the entrance of man into the world has ideally reconstructed the universe. Our own experience will convince us that there has been a material as well as an ideal reconstruction. The movements of Nature are not the same as they would have been if the simplest manifestations of life had been absent from the scene. Every word we speak creates a motion in the atmosphere, which on the principles of science can have no end. Every step we plant upon the ground displaces an atom of the earth on which we move. Every pebble we cast into the sea awakens circles of motion whose influence is, scientifically speaking, interminable. These are commonplaces; but all the more do they illustrate the great principle we have in view: they prove that, explain it as we will, the great evolutionary chain of material Nature occupies to-day a totally different position

from that which it occupied before the birth of life, and that it is through the birth of life, and through the development of mind, that the links of the material chain have been modified and changed.

If now we assume that the principle of mind, which confessedly exists in the middle of the chain, existed originally at its head, we shall have solved already the main difficulty between the claims of evolution and miracle. We have seen that science has left to faith the right to make such an assumption. She has admitted that at the head of the chain there exists a world which to her is inscrutable, unknowable; and in that admission she has left open to the flight of faith a region as yet unappropriated by knowledge. Christian faith has appropriated that region, and has postulated at the head of the chain the assumption of an omnipotent and omniscient will. Once grant this assumption to be not unscientific, which science herself has confessed, and all the difficulties between evolution and miracle ought to vanish away. If there be mind at the head of the chain, there can be no reason in the world why it should not be able to do what is effected by mind in the middle of the chain. If mind in the middle of the chain—mind as we know it and feel it—has actually succeeded

in altering the natural course which would have been followed in its absence by the mechanical universe, by what reasoning can it be affirmed that at least an equal power is not possessed by that omnipotent and omniscient will which faith places at the head of all things? Once concede the existence of such a will, and you must concede to it all the rights of mind, all the powers which confessedly lie within your own mental being. The mechanical course of Nature has been dominated by your own spirit; shall it not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits?

But I may be reminded that I have ignored the presence of a great law of Nature, whose discovery is one of the main triumphs of modern science—the law of the correlation of forces. I may be reminded that it is precisely in this place that the chain of evolution presses most heavily upon the doctrine of miracles. Mr. Stopford Brooke, in an eloquent sermon on the nature of prayer, has made great use of this law to disprove the possibility of any answer from without. The illustration on which he lays hold is that of a storm at sea. He tells us that the forces expended in that storm are bound to expend themselves, that what is given out to-day is simply the equivalent of what was gathered up yesterday. He warns us accordingly

that it is of no use to pray for the mitigation of the storm so far as we have that end in view; the only good of such a prayer must be that it may serve to calm the mind, and prepare it to sustain with equanimity whatever may befall. To arrest the progress of the storm would be to arrest the correlation of forces, to refuse the right of outflow to those elements of Nature which yesterday were gathered in.

Now I agree with Mr. Brooke that a storm at sea or anywhere else is a perfect illustration of that scientific principle called the correlation of forces. I agree also with Mr. Brooke that to interrupt the outflow of what was once an inflow would be to violate a law of Nature; and, as a matter of fact, I do not believe in the violation of natural law. But the question is, Is there conceivable any other method in which the desired result could be effected? Is it conceivable that a mental force should be able, without interrupting the correlation of natural forces, to set in motion certain currents which might modify the destructive effects of these forces? Do we see anything analogous to this in the powers of the human mind in their action upon external Nature? I think we do. Have we ever considered the precise philosophic import of that remarkable experiment called throwing oil on

the waters. That experiment has been devised by the human mind in answer to the cries and prayers of shipwrecked mariners. Its design is to calm within a certain radius the waters troubled by the storm, and so to afford time for possible relief. Now what is it that is actually done by any successful experiment of throwing oil on the waters? There is, as we have said, an actual pacification effected within a limited radius. But how is the pacification effected? Has the correlation of forces been interrupted? Has the law of physical evolution been violated? Not at all. The elements of the storm, which were gathered in yesterday, have been allowed freely to expend themselves to-day, and the amount of the force given out has been precisely equivalent to the amount of the force taken in. What has happened is not a violation but a transcendence of law. There has been superinduced over the original forces the action of another and a more powerful force. That force is not the oil but the mind. The oil might have existed for ages without producing any such result, if the faculties of the human soul had not possessed the power to recognise its adaptation to such a use. Here, then, in the experience of man, we have, on however small a scale, the instance of a mental force able to enter into the sphere of physical

forces, and able within that sphere, without violating their action, to modify their influence. How shall it seem a thing incredible that what a human mind can do, a Divine mind should also be able to achieve? Postulate by that act of faith, which we have seen to be not unscientific, the existence of an omnipotent and omniscient intelligence at the head of the evolutionary chain, and on what principle are we entitled to deny to that intelligence the power which we recognise as existing in our own souls? On what principle are we entitled to say that the power whom we profess to worship as the Creator of heaven and earth has less influence over the forces of heaven and earth than those limited human faculties which materialism declares to be the product of these forces? Are we not led by such a conclusion into the wildest unscientific fallacy, into the assertion of a violation of natural law compared to which the miracles of Christianity grow pale?

We have now looked at the subject on its two sides; we have viewed it both in its religious and in its scientific aspect. It remains that we should ask if there be any common standpoint from which the two sides may be seen together. Does Scripture offer any conception of the universe which will lend itself to the conception entertained by

modern science? It seems to me that such a community of standpoint will be found in the remarkable passage, Ephesians ii. 21, "In whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord." We have called it a remarkable passage because, however unconsciously, it is singularly in unison with modern views. It recognises at the outset that the universe is a growth, that it does not reach its perfection at a leap or bound, but through a gradual process of development ascends to its goal. It recognises that this growth is a procession from one unity to another. The structure at first exists only ideally in the thought of the Divine Spirit; this is expressed in the words, "In whom." Then comes the actual separation of elements, and each several building is seen fitly framed together in distinct and seemingly independent existence. At last the separation is overruled by a new unity, and each several building is so united with the other as to become the many mansions of one holy temple. Such is the Apostle's conception of the development of this universe. It is not really a procession from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, and from the heterogeneous back to the homogeneous again. We know what had to intervene before this building could be consummated—

a series of successive stages, each rising above its predecessor, and each marking a transcendence of the original law. Step by step we see the plan of the building unfolded, and we are made increasingly conscious that its plan is the development of spirit. First in the scale comes that which we call dead matter, though it is a term which expresses rather what we do not know than what we do know. Then comes the manifestation of matter, no longer as dead, but as alive, and we are introduced into the presence of that inscrutable thing called force. Next we are called to observe a phenomenon, which, for want of a better name, we may call the prophecy of life; we allude to that process of crystallisation by which material forces select regular forms. By and by we have life itself, though as yet only spontaneous life, life unconscious of its being, the life of the vegetable world. A little higher in the scale and we reach life conscious, the life that feels and struggles, the vitality of the animal frame. Another step upward and we have a development higher still; we have come to the life of humanity, to an existence which is not only conscious, but conscious of its own consciousness. A final stage remains, and it is that towards which from the beginning the whole fabric was moving; humanity culminates

in the Son of Man. It is no longer merely life spontaneous, life sentient, life conscious of its own sentiency; it is life capable of imparting itself. The first Adam is at best but a living soul, the second is a quickening or life-giving Spirit. Such is the plan of the building as it is unfolded by revelation, as it is seen in history, as it is chronicled by science. It is a plan which at every stage demands the transcendence of the lower by the higher law. Every step of that plan is a step of miracle in relation to the grade below it. Force is a miracle from the standpoint of dead matter, because it transcends that *vis inertiæ* which is the law of dead matter's being. Crystallisation is a miracle from the standpoint of force, because it indicates that force is softening down into something which resembles an apprehension of beauty. Vegetation is a miracle in the light of the mere crystallised form, for it is the introduction on the scene of something which can propagate itself. The animal is a miracle in the light of the vegetable world, because it reveals the arrest of life's spontaneity, and the sensation of its pain. The human is a miracle in the light of the animal, because it reveals a law that transcends the sensation of life, and is able to criticise that sensation. Lastly, the Son of Man is a miracle in

the light of the human, though not in the light of the Highest. He is the very nature of God, but He is as yet abnormal to the merely human. In Him the law of life reaches its utmost power of transcendence—the power not only to be, but to impart its being; not only to live, but to communicate its existence; the climax of miracles is reached when the law of the Spirit of life has made us free.

II.

BIOGENESIS.

By the Rev. P. W. DARNTON, B.A.

THE almost unprecedented popularity of Professor Drummond's "Natural Law in the Spiritual World" is full of significance for those who study the rapid changes and developments of modern theological thought. That ten editions of such a book should be demanded in the course of about two years indicates, we think, a great desire in the minds of a large circle of readers for fresh evidences of the supernatural. A deep conviction has been produced by the researches and speculations of such men as Huxley, Herbert Spencer, and the followers of Darwin, that the old methods of proof are somehow imperfect, and are less reliable than was supposed; and such a book as this, which professes to find a new basis for theology, and to bring spiritual facts into line with scientific conclusions, must have, therefore, a great fascination for multitudes of people.

Possibly one reason of the profound interest taken by thoughtful men in the book, has been the freshness and originality of the views propounded. The first effect upon the minds of many readers—we are speaking from much observation—has been one of wonder and perplexity. They have been arrested by the boldness with which the scientific method has been applied to religious philosophy, by the way in which conclusions of scientific and even sceptical writers have been pressed into the service of the very theology against which they were aimed. Some have been repelled by the somewhat hard and relentless manner in which conclusions have been pressed to their logical consequences, and have been alarmed at the prospect of being driven by the pitiless arguments of modern science into a Calvinism which the Christian Church seemed to have left behind. The suspicion, too, has crept in that if the facts of the spiritual can be accounted for by well-known laws of the material world, we get rid of the supernatural altogether, and reduce it to a mere domain of Nature. Further consideration will no doubt show these timid critics that this result will be no loss, but on the contrary an enormous gain, if the great facts which we call "spiritual," and which assure us of immortality and of God, can be established as firmly as the

facts and laws of Nature are proved by scientific research. Besides, such persons may take comfort from the reflection that at all events, in another sphere of existence, when we are able to take the Divine view of all things, we shall assuredly perceive the perfect oneness of God's rule, and the essential identity of what we are obliged at present to call the two worlds of Nature and Grace. Meanwhile, no doubt, the very largeness of the field opened for speculation by the method pursued by Professor Drummond has startled and even alarmed some, and has caused some natural hesitation in their judgment of the book.

And here let us remark that the aim of the writer is not, as one of his critics supposes, to present us with a complete system of religious philosophy. He distinctly disclaims this pretension when he says in his preface,[1] "The result of the inquiry, so far as its expression in systematic form is concerned, I have not given in this book. To reconstruct a Spiritual Religion—for this is all the method can pretend to—on the lines of Nature would be an attempt from which one better equipped in both directions might well be pardoned if he shrank." He suggests a method which, if followed out, might, indeed, produce a complete system,

[1] "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," p. xii.

but he certainly does not pretend to give us one.

It is, of course, always most important, if we would make a true estimate of an author's work, to grasp the idea which governed the writer's mind, and the failure to do this has, we think, prevented some from doing justice to the real value of the book.

Although the book is so original, yet, as always happens with any great formative truth, it has its roots in the past. Almost all religious thinkers have been struck with the apparent identity between certain facts and laws of Nature, and those belonging to the higher region of mind and spirit. Not only Archbishop Trench in the passage quoted by Professor Drummond,[1] but right down from the earliest times it has been seen that the use of parable or allegory implies a great deal more than the mere accidental likeness between two facts or sets of events. Thus Tertullian says,[2] "All things here are witnesses of a resurrection, all things in *Nature are prophetic outlines* of Divine operations, God not merely *speaking* parables, but *doing* them." Again, "God holding out the hand to faith, which He helps by means of likenesses and parables, both

[1] "Natural Law," &c. Introduction, p. 8.
[2] Quoted in Trench on Parables, p. 13.

by words and things." And Trench himself, in a sentence even more appropriate to Mr. Drummond's argument than the one he has quoted, and which might almost be said to contain the germ of his theory, says,[1] "There is a confident expectation in the minds of men of the reappearance in higher spheres of the same laws and relations which they have recognised in the lower." The very parables of our Lord almost compel us to believe that the world of Nature is not only used as the picture or shadow of the spiritual world, but as the lower range of a world vaster than we can conceive, the rehearsal on a lower plane of the laws which govern the great unseen universe. That this is so, and that the argument from analogy has infinitely more cogency than was formerly allowed, seems to be the dominant thought in the author of this remarkable book.

In this light we may see that not only the first and most noteworthy chapter—that on which we propose to make some special remark—but the subsidiary ones, such as those on "Degeneration," "Growth," "Eternal Life," &c., have their place and end to serve in his plan. It is true that much which is said in these chapters "would be correct if there were no spiritual life at all," that

[1] Trench on Parables, p. 13.

"these are but the laws of life and mind," but if the author can show that they are the laws of spiritual life also, even though there is nothing new in the statement, he has given new illustrations of his main thought. Grant the spiritual life (and this is necessary to any consideration of its laws), and the well-known causes of growth or degeneracy in the one world are seen to be the same as those in the other.

But the practical value of the book depends upon the first chapter. Its reputation will stand or fall with its doctrine of Biogenesis. The book may indeed have a distinct value as the work of a pioneer. We, at least, cannot doubt that time will prove the general soundness of the argument contained in the introduction. The author may be wrong or defective in his application of the method, but we can hardly doubt the soundness of it, nor that some day the absolute unity of the universe of God will be demonstrated, and the apparent contradictions between the natural and spiritual will be solved by the larger conception which shall melt the two into one.

The author tells us that in the studies which have resulted in the book before us, he did not begin by tabulating doctrines, and then proceed to match them with certain laws of Nature, but

he "ran up the natural law as far as it would go," and the "appropriate doctrine burst into view" as he reached the top.[1]

That is, he thought rather as a scientist than a theologian. He took, for instance, the facts included in the scientific doctrine of Biogenesis, and having considered what they are, and what they tell of life in general, he asked what relation they have to a super-sensuous world, the world of spirit, and there finding the law of regeneration, it at once appeared to him as the same law expressed not in terms of Nature but of spirit.

Now while this is a perfectly correct method so far as it goes, it is naturally the method of a scientist. In order to complete the enquiry, it seems to us that it will be necessary to reverse the process, and bringing the theologian on the scene let him enquire into the nature and significance of the spiritual law of regeneration, and having done so, look down into Nature and see if there be any law there which answers to the spiritual, and what modifications are needed in consequence of the difference in the substances with which the law has to deal.

If our readers would follow the line of Christian

[1] Preface, p. xvii.

thought upon this subject, from the earliest down to our own times, they would probably be surprised at the remarkable unanimity among Christian thinkers. No doubt controversies have arisen upon this subject, and various theories have been put forward to explain the nature and seat and occasion of the change known as regeneration—theories rendered respectable in modern days by such names as Schleiermacher, Ebrard, and Delitzsch. But even among these there is a general agreement upon the two main points, viz., the reality and depth of the change, and its supernatural source.

Indeed we can go back even to times before the Christian era, and into the regions of Greek philosophy, and find witnesses to these great facts of human consciousness. Bushnell gives a most remarkable and suggestive set of extracts from Plato and others which seem almost like evangelical statements, and all of which tend to exhibit, among the Greeks, a deep conviction of the necessity of an inward and supernatural change in the human heart. Plato says, "If we have rightly conceived the case, virtue is acquired neither by Nature's force, nor by any institutes of discipline or teaching, but it comes to those who have it by a certain Divine inspiration, over and above the mind's own

force or exertion." [1] And again, "That beatitude or spiritual liberty is only to have the demon (that is, the guiding spirit alluded to by Socrates) dwelling in us." [2] Seneca says, "No one is able to clear himself, let some one give him a hand, let some one lead him out." [3]

It may be well to append a few short sentences from writers since the Reformation to indicate more clearly this general consent upon the subject. Luther himself says, in a comment on the conversation between Christ and Nicodemus, "My teaching is not of doing and leaving undone, but of a change in the man." [4] Calvin tells us that "by the words, born again, he means, not the correction of one part, but the renovation of the whole nature, whence," says he, "it follows, that there is nothing in us except what is evil." [5]

Hengstenberg, in his commentary on the same conversation, says, "An entirely new beginning must be made in opposition to the opinion that only a continued building on the ground of Nature is needed." [6] Ebrard declares that "the most hidden substantial germ of our being is born again in regeneration, not merely changed, but re-born." [7]

[1] Meno., 89. Quoted by Bushnell in "Nature and the Supernatural," p. 166. [2] Theages, 128. [3] Ep., 52.
[4] Stier, iv. 17. [5] Hengstenberg on John, p. 162.
[6] Hengstenberg on John, p. 161. [7] Dogmatic. Vol. II., p. 20.

Stier speaks in a manner singularly similar to the language used by Professor Drummond. "We cannot of ourselves, of our own knowledge and will, come into the kingdom of God; but that kingdom comes down to us, through a new and heavenly birth by the spirit of God." [1]

Very similar are the definitions and statements of our more recent English writers of the broader school of theology.

"It is therefore declared," says Bushnell, "as the necessary condition of our salvation, that we must be born again, born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God; and this great change is the beginning and spring of all true, heavenly virtue, because it is the revelation of God in the soul"—"Regeneration is, in fact, the soul's assumption, or resumption by God." [2]

We must go further than these statements, however, if we would be able to represent, in an intelligible form of thought, the truth expressed by the word regeneration. We must ask what a radical change means, and how far we can trace and define the Divine agency. Here we come upon the controversial ground to which we have alluded above, which, happily, we need not tread.

[1] Stier's "Reden Jesu," p. 382.

[2] "Nature and the Supernatural," p. 272.

This is not the place to enter upon an elaborate theological discussion, but we may indicate the lines along which a true conclusion can be reached. The New Testament expressions respecting the new birth are doubtless very striking and very strong. "Ye must be born again." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." "If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation." "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son, hath not life." In such passages as these, the Scriptural doctrine seems clearly and strongly laid down; and no fair-minded student of the New Testament can deny that its writings are steeped in a supernaturalism of the nature thus suggested. According to this doctrine, a man cannot by any mere exertion of will or effort become partaker of the spiritual life offered to him by God. Nicodemus could not come into the Divine kingdom, could not *see* it, by merely redoubling his attention to Jewish rites and Jewish teachers—as Ebel of Königsberg says, "It is not doctrine, but life that is concerned."

The Apostle Paul bears his personal testimony to the reality of such a change, and by his own experience explains Christ's doctrine. "It pleased God, who gave me natural birth, and called me by

His grace, to reveal His Son in me;"[1] and "By the grace of God I am what I am."[2] We may and do likewise appeal to the Christian consciousness of all ages, and we find one almost invariable testimony in favour of the doctrine that spiritual life is something different from the life of Nature; and even when men deny the doctrine in their creeds, they admit it in their hymns and prayers. Indeed a hymn book is one of the most wonderful evidences we possess of the essential oneness of all Christian sects with reference to the fundamental principles of Christianity.

But we shall naturally ask—Are there no other Christian experiences, and no other Scriptural statements which seem opposed to such a doctrine? Most assuredly there are. Scripture may seem to make spiritual life a gift altogether independent of human will, and Christian consciousness may devoutly acknowledge and praise God as the only Giver of Life; and yet Scripture appeals to a power of choice in man; and men are as conscious of the possession of such a power as they are of supernatural aid. There is no doubt an apparent contradiction here, and one which has given rise to numberless controversies, and which has actually thrown theologians into two great camps — the

[1] Galatians i. 15. [2] 1 Corinthians xv. 10.

Augustinian and Pelagian; or, in more modern phrase, the Calvinist and Arminian. In the one, the passages which speak of Divine agency and human infirmity are put foremost, and the other class of passages made by some Procrustean process to agree with them; and in the other the opposite method is adopted, and the latter are made the basis of a system to which the former are made to yield. The "New Theology," so called by the most recent expounder of it, "does not differ essentially from the old in its treatment of regeneration, but it broadens the ground of it; finding its necessity not only in sin, but in the undeveloped nature of man, or in the flesh. It is disposed, also, to regard it as a process involving known laws and analogies, and to divest it of that air of magical mystery in which it has been held—a plain and simple matter by which one gets out of the lower into the higher by the Spirit of God." [1]

If the writer of this paragraph means that any explanation of the process whereby a man gets "out of the lower into the higher," can rob it of mystery, we think he is grievously mistaken; and if such an explanation were possible, it would rob the truth of the very element of supernaturalism which gives it value. The very words, "by the

[1] Munger's "Freedom of Faith," p. 33.

Spirit of God," reproduce the mystery, and we may safely say that until our ideas of "life" are robbed of mystery, such a profound spiritual fact as the regeneration of a human soul, can never become "a plain and simple matter."

But it is evident that to satisfy the Scriptural statements on this subject and the experience of men, we have to grant two apparently contradictory propositions: the inability of man to rise into a spiritual life by any effort of his own, and yet the indefeasible right and actual power inherent in the human will to choose the good or evil. In this we come very near the ultimate contradiction, so powerfully wrought out in Mansell's famous Bampton Lecture, between the absolute and the conditioned. But we do not think that we are necessarily driven against this blank wall. The doctrine of regeneration can, we think, be stated without involving this hopeless contradiction. It is well to note the consequences of too sweeping and unlimited assertions on the one side or the other. For it is in its logical consequence that we see the real nature of an assertion. The consequences of an uncompromising Calvinistic creed, are well stated by a writer in the *Expositor*. "One logical and direct consequence is that for the vast majority of men there is no hope at all."

"If men are blind and dead in this sense, *i.e.* unable to stir or move, to what end except to mock their helplessness and misery, does the Gospel of the grace of God summon them to awake and arise that Christ may give them life?"[1]

Such an absolute and one-sided statement as we sometimes meet with of man's inability and the sovereignty of Divine grace, necessarily excludes all human responsibility, and narrows the Gospel of Christ to a religion of even smaller scope than Judaism, and absolutely reverses all Paul's exultant declarations of its grandeur and universality.

On the other hand, if we take note only of the other class of passages, and preach and speak as though the spiritual life could be attained by the mere exercise of human will and effort, do we not indeed, in Professor Drummond's words, "render the whole scheme of the Christian religion abortive"? What becomes of Christ's teaching to Nicodemus? of Apostolic doctrine? of the Christian experience of all ages? If man can save himself by his own effort on the plane of his common human nature, what is the function of Christianity? Why did Christ live and die? Surely it must be evident that Christianity is a supernatural religion or it is nothing.

[1] *Expositor* for January, 1884, p. 24.

But let us enlarge our conceptions of the Divine work. Let us cease to permit our ideas to be confined within the narrow circle of any theological school. Let us try to rise to a point at which we can see both sides of the truth. Is it not credible, and in view of the whole revelation of the Divine Fatherhood more than credible, that the Spirit of God is present in the hearts of all His children? or rather, let us say (using, in both cases, of course, a figure of speech), is ever around and near to all of us,—that He is constantly waiting for us to yield to His love,—that in a thousand secret and indefinable ways He is urging us to yield to His influence and receive His renovating grace? May we not perceive, too, that the coming of Christ was really the expression in terms of finite space and time—at one point—visibly—before the eyes of all men—of the process which had been going on from the beginning, and is proceeding everywhere—that God was always and is always redeeming men; and that this is the meaning of the expression, "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"?

Only by this interposition and continued indwelling of God can men rise into spiritual life, the life of Christ; but this is accessible to all, for "God is not far from any one of us." It would

be altogether unlike what we know of the Divine government to suppose that God would bestow upon any the choicest gifts without some act of choice on the part of the recipient. The very story of the entrance of sin by an act of wrongful choice indicates more strongly than anything could do, the value the Creator sets upon the freedom of the human will. Besides, experience corroborates the inferences from Scripture, for though each man thankfully attributes his better desires and purer aspirations to the influence of the Holy Spirit, yet is he perfectly conscious, not only of a single act, but of a continual exertion of choice in accepting the grace offered to him in the Gospel. Our conception of the world in relation to God, then, is that of a vast family, among which invisibly, and often unrecognised, the Divine Father moves; that all life, the lowest as well as the highest, is His gift, and is directly sustained by His influence. He is secretly guiding all events, gradually revealing Himself to mankind, and so making more intelligible appeals to their conscience, giving, meanwhile, large and, what seems to us, who are unable to survey the vast field and scope of His purposes, extravagant freedom to the human will, but so ruling and guiding even the results of free choice, as to work on towards a better condition.

One part of His work seems to consist in a general influence exerted in and through the events of history, which tends to a gradual uplifting and moral development of the race; the other part consists of a special and spiritual influence upon individual character, called by us regeneration, whereby a man becomes possessed of the very life of God, the higher spiritual power which can only become ours by communion with a spiritual environment. A man in the act or process of conversion, therefore, recognises facts. He comes to see what *is;* to realise to himself what is already *real,* the redeeming love of God; the right of God to perfect obedience, and the true happiness which comes to man along that path. He does not lift himself up to this. He cannot. So long as he is on the mere plane of Nature, he is outside this Divine kingdom. But "the chamber is not only ready to receive the new life, but the Guest is expected, and, till He comes, is missed. Till then the soul yearns and longs, wastes and pines, waving its tentacles piteously in the empty air, feeling after God, if so be that it may find Him."[1] And when this hunger of the soul becomes articulate, and by the approach of God man comes to understand *what* it is after which he is feeling, then, perhaps simultaneously,

[1] "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," p. 300.

perhaps by immediate sequence, come the choice of the soul, and the touch of God which quickens the spirit into new life. Time and space are not entities here. We speak because we are obliged to think in terms of time and space. But with reference to God these words lose their meaning. We say "then" because it seems to us "then." To God "then" and "now" are one and the same. Sequence is for us. God dwells in eternity—the timeless world.

Before we attempt to look for the natural analogue to this supernatural process, we must attempt a partial reply to one question which will certainly rise to the lips of thoughtful men. In this great process of the ages, this vast scheme of human redemption, what becomes of the multitudes of human beings whose lives seem to be only used as stepping-stones for advancing generations? Are the myriads who have died and are dying every day either too young, or too deeply sunk in an ignorance from which they have no escape, even to conceive of a spiritual nature,—are these merely "cast as rubbish to the void"? Some persons seem to be able to believe that. We cannot. And there is no necessity to believe it. We need only enlarge our ideas and let them partake somewhat more of the Divine greatness. To us the

few years of earthly existence seem long and all-important. All-important they may be, just as the years of school-life are all-important to manhood. But surely God does not regard our seventy years as we do. We must, if we would live and teach Christianity in these days of ever-widening benevolence, we must believe that the process of redemption which is going on in this world is continued beyond the world, at least for all who have not come within its beneficent reach here. There is no question here of the fate of the man who deliberately rejects the Divine offer of help, and elects to live out his lower life with all its results; but of the millions upon millions of our fellow-creatures who, with affections and powers like our own, pass away from earthly life without a glimpse of that light which to us makes the shadow of death but the dawn of a new day, what can be said? Unless we are prepared to accuse the Infinite Father of such a waste of human life as is awful and heartrending even to imagine, we must believe that the Divine scheme of redemption is not bounded by the limitations of our brief life, nor confined within the bounds of mere imperfect and finite conceptions of space and time.

To such a point, then, has the theologian, with the aid of modern research and modern thought, come,

and having reached such conclusions respecting the regeneration of man, he surveys more critically the world of Nature. He knows something of the doctrine of "the law of continuity," and the more profound his conviction of the unity of God, the more inclined will he be to expect to find the same ideas reproduced, with necessary modifications, in various domains of the universe. With these convictions and feelings he is told of the law of Biogenesis in the realm of Nature. He sees that life here can only spring from life; that such a thing as spontaneous generation is unknown among the phenomena of Nature. He is struck by the similiarity between the scientific statements of this fact, and Scriptural statements of the doctrine of regeneration. The process, indeed, goes on in his mind, which Professor Drummond describes as "enunciating spiritual law in the exact terms of Biology and Physics." Is he right in concluding that he has found the equivalent in Nature to the law of regeneration of the human spirit—that the law by which alone the mineral kingdom can rise into the organic, namely, by the touch of life from the kingdom above it, is the same, only on a lower plane, as the law by which a man can only become a member of the kingdom of heaven, by the touch of the Divine Spirit? We think the philosophical

thinker would be right in, at all events, *provisionally*, coming to this conclusion. But he can only do so provisionally until he has well considered, not only the superficial similiarity, but the difference of these two domains of the same law. The law may be one and the same, but the mode of its action may be exceedingly different. Every law is modified in its action by every other law in its own domain, and the mode in which a scientist would talk of the passing of the inorganic into the organic will not, or at least ought not, to be the same as that in which a Christian teacher will talk of the new birth of a human soul. And why? Because of the difference between the mass of organic matter and the highly-organised object in Nature called a *man*. It is here, we think, that Professor Drummond has made a fatal mistake. Perhaps, indeed, we may rather call it an omission than a misstatement, but it is radical. He seems to have forgotten for the moment what he has allowed elsewhere, both in the paragraph quoted above and in the whole scope of the argument of such chapters as those on "Degeneration," "Parasitism," &c. There he acknowledges man's responsibility. Here, when he is developing the doctrine of Biogenesis, he simply ignores it. He may have a special purpose in doing so, though it is not easy to see what it

can be, but evidently such an enormous difference exists between the two worlds that it cannot be ignored. Inorganic matter, blind, helpless, absolutely without life of any kind, cannot be the proper analogue of the living, active soul, with its wonderful capacities and power of choice. What difference, then, will this contrast make to the statement of the law? It will make no difference to the fact. The law of Biogenesis is true with relation to the passage of the vegetable to the animal world, as well as with reference to the lower, inorganic world. And it is true higher up—with reference to the birth of man's lower nature into the world of spiritual life. But the expression of the law must be modified by the influence of surrounding laws. "The world of natural men is staked off from the spiritual world by barriers which have never yet been crossed from within." "The spiritual world is guarded from the next in order beneath it by a law of Biogenesis." [1] Is that true? True, if we remember that we are uttering facts respecting the plastic, living soul of man in the hard, unsympathetic language of science, and that though the higher life is not accessible by "moral effort" or "evolution of character," it is so close to every man, so constantly pressing upon him, and seeking

[1] Page 71.

an entrance, that a single act of will can break down the barrier, and admit him into the sacred precincts. False, utterly false, if the words are intended to exclude all except the few who, without their own choice, without any apparent reason even on God's part, are arbitrarily admitted into a world which they never desired and never sought. We do not believe the latter to be the meaning of Professor Drummond, though we are sure that the hard, incisive, pitiless way in which he states the law must go far to prejudice many minds against his whole argument. Admit the facts of which the mind is conscious, admit the function of the human will in the religious life of man, and this natural law of Biogenesis is readily received as the expression on the lower plane of Nature of the great truth or doctrine of regeneration in the higher. The actual sway of a law does not depend upon the nature of the substance which it governs, though the expression of it may do so. The inorganic world, which is raised into a new life by "the bending down of some living form," possesses certain endowments. It contains substances necessary for the life and growth of the higher organisms. If we can so far exercise our imagination as to suppose it also endowed, like the leaf of a sensitive plant, with the power of yielding to or resisting

this touch of life from above, we shall have a still closer analogy to the substances which in the form of human souls—beings endowed with thought and will—the law has to do with it in its higher ranges. The choice of the Divine service no more and no less presupposes the possession of spiritual life than the "longing and yearning" of which Professor Drummond speaks. But the fact that God waits on every man's need, and is accessible to every man's choice, does rob the doctrine of Biogenesis of all that is cruel and repellent.

It has been suggested by one writer,[1] and it is a happy and pregnant suggestion, that "the regenerating agency of the Spirit of God in the human soul is most fitly symbolised by the agency of the organising intelligence which guides the evolution of every living being." We do not see that there is any opposition between this and Professor Drummond's view of Biogenesis. The "organising Intelligence" must begin to work at some point. As has already been said, we believe that this organising Intelligence is, in fact, working among mankind everywhere and always. But, evidently, we must except those individual souls from which it is excluded by the man himself who does not

[1] *British Quarterly Review.* No. 143. Art. "Evolution viewed in its relation to Theology." See also No. 159.

desire and will not tolerate its presence, and we must allow that we do not see any effects of its presence in the vast multitudes of the ignorant and degenerating heathen. But where the man responds to the gracious influence of God's Spirit, which, like the all-encircling air, presses upon the whole surface of the man's being, seeking constantly an entrance, there at once the new life is imparted. And it is at this point, the initial stage of the evolution, that the law of Biogenesis appears. We venture to say that if Professor Drummond will supply this one defect, which we have endeavoured to point out, and if he will apply to his speculations upon the doctrine of Biogenesis the principles of the remainder of the book he will win the adhesion and grateful acknowledgment of a large and widening circle of readers.

III.

EVOLUTION AND DESIGN.

By the Rev. Prof. A. W. MOMERIE, D.Sc., LL.D.

THE theory of evolution leaves one half of the universe completely unaccounted for, viz., the mental half. Just think. You can conceive the development of complicated material structures from simpler forms of matter. You can conceive, for example, that the original cloud of fiery gas may have been split up, under the influence of gravitation, into several distinct masses of nebulous matter, and that each of these separate masses may have become a solar system, by throwing off rings of vapour which eventually condensed into planets. You can conceive that protoplasm may have been formed by the union, under chemical influences, of certain inorganic elements; that from protoplasm came, first monera, and then cells; that these cells multiplied by subdivision, and afterwards united together for the building up of

complex vegetable or animal organisms; and that organisms have gone on developing into more and more complicated and perfect forms. But you cannot conceive that, from any combination of material atoms, immaterial consciousness has been evolved. A being conscious of his unity cannot possibly be formed out of a number of atoms, unconscious of their diversity. Any one who thinks this possible is capable of asserting that half-a-dozen fools might be compounded into a single wise man.

This is sometimes admitted by the acutest of the agnostics. Call to mind, *e.g.*, some remarks of Tyndall's:—"The passage from the physics of the brain to the corresponding facts of consciousness is unthinkable. Granted that a definite thought and a definite molecular action in the brain occur simultaneously, we do not possess the intellectual organ, nor apparently the rudiments of an organ, which would enable us to pass, by a process of reasoning, from the one to the other. They appear together, but we do not know why." This paragraph is quoted with approval by John Stuart Mill. Since, then, the passage from the brain to consciousness is unthinkable, it has not been thought by evolutionists. Since the connection between physical processes and sensations is an

insoluble problem, it has not been solved by the evolutionists. They themselves being judges, consciousness is something which lies altogether outside the sphere of evolution.

Evidently, then, those who assert that modern physical science accounts for the whole universe, say what is not true. The insufficiency of the theory of evolution is curiously illustrated by several recent attempts to intellectualise matter. It is now often maintained by physicists, in a vague, indefinite way, that everything material has a mental side. At the close of his essay on "Scientific Materialism," Tyndall gives us an eloquent description of his musings on the top of the Matterhorn:—"Hacked and hurt by time, the aspect of the mountain, from its higher crags, saddened me. Hitherto the impression it made was that of savage strength; here we had inexorable decay. But this notion of decay implied a reference to a period when the Matterhorn was in the full strength of mountainhood. Thought naturally ran back to its remoter origin and sculpture. Nor did thought halt there, but wandered on through molten worlds to that nebulous haze which philosophers have regarded as the source of all material things. I tried to look at this universal cloud as containing within itself the predic-

tion of all that has occurred. I tried to imagine it as the seat of those forces, whose action was to issue in solar and stellar systems and all that they involve. Did that formless fog contain potentially the sadness with which I regarded the Matterhorn? Did the thought which now ran back to it simply return to its primeval home. If so, had we not better recast our definitions of matter and force? For if life and thought be the very flower of both, any definition which omits life and thought must be inadequate, if not untrue." There is a similar and more frequently quoted passage at the close of the Belfast Address. The Professor cites with approval Bruno's saying—"Matter is not the mere empty capacity which philosophers have pictured her to be, but the universal mother, who brings forth all things as the fruit of her own womb." "And," continues Tyndall, "believing as I do in the continuity of Nature, I cannot stop abruptly when our microscopes cease to be of use. Here the vision of the mind authoritatively supplements the vision of the eye. By a necessity engendered and justified by science, I cross the boundary of experimental evidence, and discern in that matter —which we in our ignorance of its latent powers, and notwithstanding our professed reverence for *its* Creator, have hitherto covered with oppro-

brium—the promise and potency of all terrestrial life."

Haeckel, also, talks very much in the same way in the preface to his "History of Creation." He, too, quotes a saying of Bruno, to the effect that "a spirit exists in all things, and no body is so small but it contains a part of the Divine substance within itself, by which it is animated." Haeckel also quotes Goethe's remark that "matter can never exist and be active without mind." And he adds —"All bodies are equally animated; wherever there is corporeal substance, there is also mental power."

Similarly the late Professor Clifford, in an ingenious but highly illogical essay upon the nature of things in themselves, proceeding upon the double fallacy of maintaining that feelings can exist without some one to feel them, and that a number of such impossible feelings, linked together in a certain complicated manner, will give rise to a self-conscious personality—Clifford asserts that the molecules of matter, though devoid of mind, "possess a small piece of mind stuff." In other words, every molecule is an unfelt feeling; and consciousness is just a combination of molecules, which are individually unconscious. The universe thus consists, he says, entirely of mind-stuff.

From these quotations you will see it is admitted by many of the acutest agnostics that the evolution of matter—in the ordinary sense of the term matter—would never have given rise to consciousness. They therefore tell us, parenthetically and incidentally, that when we talk of matter we must remember something mental always goes along with it. It follows, then, on their own showing, that the universe, as we know it, has not come from gas and gravitation alone—using those words in their ordinary signification—but from gas and gravitation *plus* something mental. Very well. That something mental I will not at present say *must*, but at any rate *may*, have designed and controlled the evolutionary development of the gravitating gas.

But it is constantly assumed by materialists that the proof of evolution is the disproof of God. And agnostics suppose that if the theory has not actually disproved the Divine existence, it has at least destroyed all positive evidence in favour of it. "When," says Haeckel, "Teleological Dualism seeks the arbitrary thoughts of a capricious Creator in the miracles of creation, Causal Monism finds in the process of development the necessary effects of eternal, immutable laws of Nature." The whole view of Haeckel

may be summed up in a sentence from Lucretius: "Nature is seen to do all things spontaneously of herself, without the meddling of the gods."

Now my answer to Haeckel, and to the agnostics generally, is this. They fail to distinguish between two kinds of purpose—one changeable, the other unchangeable. With the latter, evolution is not incompatible. On the contrary, that doctrine inevitably leads up to a Being who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. It is changeable purpose alone with which evolution is inconsistent. Evolutionists have taught us that the present system of things cannot be due to a purpose which continually contradicts itself. They have shown us that the development of Nature is not interfered with by a capricious and changeable mind. And upon this important subject the world stood much in need of their teaching.

Men have too often made gods after their own image. Even civilised nations have frequently believed in a deity who was but a man "writ large"—a very indifferent, sixth-rate kind of man into the bargain. Think, for example, of the old view of creation, which, owing to the authority of Cuvier and Agassiz, was long received as the orthodox doctrine. According to this theory, there were a series of quite distinct periods of creation,

and each period had its peculiar flora and fauna. These periods were separated from one another by revolutions of an unknown kind, called cataclysms or catastrophes; and each revolution resulted in the utter extinction of the then existing animals and plants. Afterwards a completely new set of organisms was created; and these existed on the globe for thousands of years, till they in their turn perished suddenly in the crash of a new revolution. Haeckel's caustic remarks upon this doctrine cannot be considered unjust. "According to this view," he says, "the Creator is nothing but a mighty man, who, plagued with *ennui*, amuses Himself with planning and constructing varied toys in the shape of organic species. After having diverted Himself with these for thousands of years, they become tiresome to Him, and He destroys them by a general revolution of the earth's surface. Then, in order to while away His time, He calls a new organic world into existence. At the end of thousands of millions of years He is struck with the happy thought of creating something like Himself, and man appears upon the scene, who gives the Creator so much to do that He is wearied no longer, and therefore need not undertake any new creation." But perhaps men's thoughts of God never reached a lower point than in the

grotesque attempts which were made, during the Middle Ages, to account for the existence of fossils. It was, for example, seriously asserted they were the rough models which the Creator had first made out of mineral substances—models which He afterwards copied in the living organisms of animals and plants!

And much later than the Middle Ages, down even to the present century, the relation of the Creator to Nature was often conceived of in a way that was nothing short of blasphemous. Nature was thought to be so imperfect a production, that the Deity could only make it answer His purpose by constant intervention and readjustment. He had not foreseen the end from the beginning. Circumstances were always arising for which no provision had been made. He was everlastingly changing the course of Nature; and, sad to say, He usually changed it for the worse. He was always seen in what was terrible and appalling. He had nothing to do with the beauty of an autumn evening, or the stillness of a moonlight night; with the merriment of youth, or the happiness of manhood, or the peacefulness of old age. In such cases things were but taking their normal course. But in agony, disaster, horror, men always recognised, as they thought, the finger of God. These were the

unmistakable tokens of His presence. If the lightning struck a man dead, it was a sign that the Deity was angry. If an earthquake or a pestilence occurred, He was beside Himself with fury. Any peculiarly loathsome disease was technically called "a visitation from God." If a mother lost her darling child, it was because the Almighty was jealous that the poor little creature should have received so much of her love. The temper of this Deity, however, was fitful. You could never be certain what He would be at. Occasionally He forgot to be angry. In His ungodlike capriciousness He had favourites, for whose sakes He would sometimes work miracles of benediction. But this benediction generally involved disaster to those who were not His favourites. The many were plundered that the few might be enriched. And the favourites, having been selected by caprice, were almost sure, sooner or later, to be by caprice rejected. He would by-and-by repent Him of His choice. Altogether, His position in the universe was that of an eternal curse! If He had but let the world alone, it might have been a pleasant place enough, and men might have lived a happy life. But He would not let things be. He was always interfering, and always doing harm. Wherever He went, He left ruin and misery in His trail.

He assumed many names, but His real name was Hate!

Now that is the kind of Deity whose existence has been disproved by the evolutionists. They have shown, once and for ever, that our world is not governed, or rather misgoverned, by omnipotent caprice. And for the establishment of this important truth rational theology will be for ever indebted to them. To believe in evolution, is to be saved at least from the degradation of mistaking for God a purely imaginary being, who, if he really existed, would excite the hatred and the scorn of every noble-hearted man. How was it that men who believed in the omnipotence of a fickle fiend such as I have described, did not curse him to his face? It was because they were cowards. The falseness of their religion had so corrupted their moral sense, that, in order to keep out of hell, they were ready to barter their very souls. But never again, thanks to the evolutionists, will this terrible dilemma be repeated. Science has vindicated—unconsciously it may be, but none the less really—vindicated the character of the Deity from the aspersions which for ages had been cast upon it. And if now we believe in God at all, we find no difficulty in worship. The fact that in Him we live, and move, and have our

being, is at once our deepest joy and our highest glory.

But purpose is not necessarily fickle. The intentions of a reasonable being, just in proportion to his reasonableness, will be steadfast and fixed. To prove that Nature bears no traces of the one kind of purpose, is certainly not equivalent to showing that she bears no traces of the other. Though she is not irregularly interfered with, she may be, nevertheless, regularly controlled.

And there is another important oversight which you will generally find in the writings of evolutionists. They frequently assume that organisms have not been designed at all, because their various parts have not been separately and individually designed. It used to be thought, for example, that the eye, in every species of animal possessing that organ, had been, in each case, directly manufactured by God. Whereas we now know that any particular organ in one species is merely an evolution from a somewhat different kind of organ in another species. But the absence of particular purpose is no evidence whatever for the absence of a general and all-embracing purpose. Though the eyes of animals have not been separately created, the possibility of vision may still have been intended to emerge in the process of evolution. Though the parts of

Nature may not indicate several purposes, the whole of Nature may testify to one.

Everywhere around us there are what seem to be signs of purpose; and these appearances are multiplied ten thousandfold by scientific investigation. If you want to see how Nature teems with contrivances, adaptations, expedients, mechanisms, read the works of Darwin. It is remarkable, too, that those who are loudest in denying the existence of purpose, are constantly using the very word which they declare to be illegitimate. Haeckel, for example, in the very book in which he says that "the much-talked-of purpose in Nature has no existence," defines an organic body as "one in which the various parts work together for the purpose of producing the phenomena of life." And this is no slip of the pen, as you will see from his description of the manner in which an organic body is built up. The most complicated animal or vegetable organism, he says, is merely a combination of the little nucleated lumps of protoplasm called cells. The building up of an organism by these cells he compares to the formation of a state. The simple cells, he says, at first exist in an isolated condition, each performing the same kind of work, and being satisfied with self-preservation, nutrition, and reproduction. "This condition of affairs corresponds

to a community of human beings as yet uncivilised. But at a later period in the history of evolution the isolated cells gather themselves together into communities, and act like citizens who wish to form a state. Groups of simple cells remain together and begin to perform different offices. Some take to one occupation, some to another, and they all work together for the good of the whole. One set of cells devotes itself to the absorption of food; others form themselves into protecting organs for the little community; some become muscle-cells, others bone-cells, others blood-cells, others nerve-cells. By this division of labour it becomes possible for the whole state to accomplish undertakings which would have been impossible for the single individual. In short, various classes or castes arise in the cell-state, following diverse occupations, and yet working together for a common purpose. In proportion as the division of labour progresses, the many-celled organism or specialised-cell community becomes more perfect or civilised. But the vital phenomena of the most perfect organism depend entirely on the activities of the cellular albuminous corpuscles." According to Haeckel, then, every cell in every organism gives distinct evidence of purpose.

But it may be urged that when scientific men speak in this way, it is because of the poverty of language, or through an occasional aberration of intellect, which leads them for the moment to adopt popular and erroneous views. It may be said that the conception of purpose is unscientific, and should be got rid of altogether. But I reply, the conception is not unscientific. The supposition that Nature means something by what she does has not unfrequently led to important scientific discoveries. It was in this way that Harvey found out the fact of the circulation of the blood. He took notice of the valves in the veins in many parts of the body, so placed as to give free passage to the blood towards the heart, but opposing its passage in the contrary direction. Then he bethought himself, to use his own words, "that such a provident cause as Nature had not placed so many valves without a design; and the design which seemed most probable was, that the blood, instead of being sent by these veins to the limbs, should go first through the arteries, and return through other veins whose valves did not oppose its course." Thus, apart from the supposition of purpose, the greatest discovery in physiological science might never have been made. Now, when the theory of evolution was less firmly established

than at present, it was constantly urged in favour of it that, whether true or not, it was a good working hypothesis, and therefore scientifically valid. The supposition of purpose in Nature, though it has not received, seems to me to deserve at least as much respect.

At any rate, if the world be not due to purpose, it must be the result of chance. It is often asserted, I know, that it is due to neither, but is the outcome of law. But this is nonsense. A law of Nature explains nothing, for it is merely a summary of the facts to be explained—it is merely a statement of the way in which things happen. The law of gravitation is *the fact* that all material bodies attract one another, with a force varying directly with their mass, and inversely with the square of their distance. Now the fact that bodies attract one another in this way cannot be explained by the law; for the fact is the law, and the law is the fact. To say that the gravitation of matter is accounted for by the law of gravitation is merely to say that matter gravitates because it gravitates. And so of the other laws of Nature; which, taken together, are the expression, in a set of convenient formulæ, of all the facts of our experience. The laws of Nature are the facts of Nature summarised. To say, then, that Nature is explained by law, is

to say that the facts are explained by themselves. The question remains, Why are the facts what they are? And to this question we can only answer—though the alternative is seldom recognised—either through purpose or by chance.

In favour of the latter hypothesis it may be urged that the *appearances* of purpose in Nature have possibly been produced by chance. Arrangements which look intentional may occasionally be purely accidental. Imagine some one set to the task of drawing letters of the alphabet out of an infinite bag, into which they had been originally cast pell-mell. Every now and then he would get consecutive letters that would spell an intelligible word. On rare occasions he might draw out an intelligible sentence or paragraph. And it is often asserted that, given eternity to work in, along with an infinite number of nonsensical drawings, he might educe the poems of Homer or Shakespeare, or any other writer you like to name. Similarly, it is said our world may have been evolved by the accidental combination of atoms. In their haphazard collision they had produced, in past time and in far-off space, worlds which bore no sign of purpose, worlds where everything was irrational, monstrous, useless, and absurd. Nature does not know, and never did know, what she is about; neither does she care.

She has never had the faintest conception of what would, or would not, turn up. Everything might just as likely have been something else. When life first appeared it was a pure accident, lucky or unlucky, as we choose to regard it. The atoms once upon a time chanced to come together in such fashion that protoplasm was the result. The particles of protoplasm kept on subdividing, changing, and combining, during which process some living creatures became possessed of a mouth, while others obtained an eye or an ear, and so on. By a continuance of good luck, animals in course of time became more and more richly endowed. They came into possession of a variety of organs which, as it turned out, were capable of being usefully employed. till at last, after a splendid series of accidents, man himself appeared upon the scene.

But it is enough to make one shudder, to think of the issues depending upon this thoughtless play of atoms. If the figures in their fantastic dance had been but slightly altered, we might have had neither hands nor feet; our feet might have been where our hands now are, and *vice versâ;* or we might have had hands and feet stuck about all over us. Our eyes might have been so placed that we could never see anything but the sky, except by standing upside down. Our ears might have been

responsive to the noises in Sirius, but incapable of catching any nearer sounds. Our heads might have been placed under our arms, or behind our backs, or not placed upon us at all. Similarly, it is by the merest good luck that there is any measure of adaptation between ourselves and the world in which we find ourselves. There might have been no correspondence between organism and environment. There might have been environment and no organism; or contrariwise, objects which looked like organisms, and no surroundings to which they could adapt themselves. It is pure accident that there is any land for us to live upon, any water for us to drink, any food for us to eat, any air for us to breathe. There might have been only men in the world. There might have been only women. There might have been no human beings of any kind; the monkey or the tadpole might, to the end of the chapter, have been the lord of creation. Or the chapter of life might never have been written at all; the cosmos might never have emerged out of chaos; the atoms might have been dashing about, up to the present time, in uninterrupted confusion.

According to the chance theory, then, our world is only one out of an infinite number of possible atomic arrangements, all of which might have been

considered equally probable beforehand. Chance, it is said, may just as easily have produced purposeful, as purposeless, appearances. *Something* was bound to come of the play of atoms; why not the particular world in which we find ourselves.

Why not? I will tell you why not. Those who ask the question forget that, so far as our experience goes, it is *only within narrow limits* that seemingly purposeful arrangements are produced by chance. And therefore, as the signs of purpose increase, the presumption in favour of their accidental origin diminishes. It is conceivable that words and sentences might, in course of time, be drawn accidentally out of a bag of letters. And if any one goes so far as to say that the poems of Homer were produced in this fashion, I am unable to prove that they were not. Still I submit that his theory is unsupported by experience. Supposing it *conceivable* that a poem might be shaken out of a bag, I have never seen or heard of one composed in this fashion. And if the presumption against the accidental origin of a purposeful arrangement of letters, such as we have in Homer, be great, the presumption against such an origin for the whole of a country's literature is, of course, much greater still. What, then,

must be the presumption against the chance origin of the purposeful arrangement of those material atoms of which the universe is composed? In a national literature we have myriads of combinations which seem to tell of design; but all the literature of the whole world is but a single item, a tiny detail, an infinitesimal fraction, in a universe which gives us the indelible impression of being riddled through and through with purpose. Let every human being now alive upon the earth spend the rest of his days and nights in writing down arithmetical figures; let the enormous numbers which these figures would represent—each number forming a library in itself—be all added together; let this result be squared, cubed, multiplied by itself ten thousand times; and the final product would still fall infinitely short of expressing the probabilities against the world having been evolved by chance. Whoever believes in its accidental origin must have a singularly constituted mind. In comparison with such a supposition, the most extravagant vagaries of a theological fanatic, the wildest imaginings of a raving lunatic, are calm and sober sense.

IV.

EVOLUTION AND THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION.

By the Rev. A. F. MUIR, M.A.

IF at first sight these two conceptions, when placed side by side, might appear mutually exclusive, this impression will be dissipated by a more thorough study of their distinctive natures and relations.

"Evolution," which has been defined as *the gradual increase of correspondence between an organ and that which environs it*, may be interpreted in two senses: it may be understood as an operation entirely within Nature, or as involving at the same time the sphere of Nature and the presence and co-operation of supernatural factors.

A person is not to be pronounced an opponent of Evolution who holds the latter view; as witness Alfred Russell Wallace, the naturalist who all but contests the palm with Darwin in regard to the discovery of this principle as a key to the pheno-

mena of the universe, Dana,[1] Lotze,[2] Drummond,[3] and many other well-known authorities.

Without binding myself to the acceptance of either of these views as ultimate or exhaustive statements of the mysterious process, I would venture to affirm that in my opinion the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation is, at least in many of its aspects, consistent with the doctrine of Evolution. Nay more, that without such a conception as that of "God manifest in the flesh," the real grandeur and vastness of the process of Evolution is not recognised.

For the illustration and proof of this position let us examine in the first place the *Christian conception of the Incarnation.* For present purposes it may be sufficient to describe the generally received conception of the Incarnation as represented by a being of two-fold nature—Divine and human—so united as to constitute one personality, both elements being at the same time equally real and lasting. That this conception, more or less fragmentarily, more or less indirectly, recurs again and again in the Old Testament Scriptures is well known to the most general reader.

And side by side with this series there appears

[1] "American Journal of Science and Arts," Oct. 1876, p. 251. "Geology," 603–4. [2] "Mikrokosmus," vol. I., bk. 3. chap. i.
[3] "Natural Law in the Spiritual World."

a series of superhuman manifestations under the character of the Angel of the Covenant, or the Angel of the Lord. Then in the course of the spiritual development of the Jewish people and intimately associated with it are certain conceptions of a Coming One in whom the hopes of the chosen people were centred, that may be described as Messianic. It matters little whether these conceptions be considered as wholly inspired, or as partly the result of human thought and experience, partly the result of superhuman communications, the case is indeed rather strengthened than otherwise by assuming a mixed origin for them. We should wholly fail to grasp the central influence of Jewish spiritual life if we supposed it to be an abstract principle of righteousness—it is ever an anticipation of a personal being in whom this righteousness was to be manifested and fulfilled; and in order to this he was conceived of as invested with superhuman attributes, as combining in his own nature qualities and properties incompatible with one another, if experience were alone to be a guide. Those, indeed, who handed on the tradition spoke of it as a revelation. And as if their consciousness of its imminent fulfilment became more intense their intimations of it grew in distinctness as it approached.

Now the moral and religious influence of this ideal development was of the utmost importance. In conjunction with the experience of universal inability amongst the people to fulfil the Law, it kept the true Israel amidst all the vicissitudes of history as a godly seed and succession until "the fulness of time *when God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.*" A nobler ideal of manhood, a more exalted standard of conduct, and the sense of a more universal brotherhood amongst men, gradually evolved themselves from the ruder elements of morality and religion which had formed the original spiritual inheritance of the people. As has been said by a distinguished Bampton lecturer (Bishop Alexander), "the whole atmosphere of Jewish religious thought was charged with mystical elements;" and these reacted upon the national and individual life in such a manner as to encourage the production of the very types of manhood in which they would be realised.

It must be confessed that according to the indications we have of its existence in Hebrew thought this conception cannot be explained as a result of development from ordinary natural experience. On the one hand it arose in the consciousness of a people who held even to fanaticism

the tenets of an absolute monotheism; and on the other it possesses such a unique individuality of its own, that apart from the historic demonstration which has been adduced by more than one scholar of the isolation of the Jewish nation from intercourse with the far East—the recognised cradle of such mystic ideas—for centuries before the Advent, all attempts to trace it to Hindoo or Greek originals have signally failed. The Hellenic incarnation is rather a metamorphism, as the Greeks thought of the gods not as purely spiritual beings, but as exaggerated human beings, with all the faults and failings of everyday human creatures; and the Brahmanic incarnation is an assumption in which the human or animal manifestation is but an evanescent and unreal mask for a demiurgic or transcendent world-force. In examples of neither of them do we discern a real qualitative duality of nature represented in one personality, as in the case of the Messianic idea.

So far, therefore, we find that whereas the idea itself refuses to be resolved into purely natural elements, or to be explained as the product of purely natural factors, it acted as an inspiring and directive impulse in the higher spiritual development of the Jewish nation.

Let us in the next place examine the *historic*

realisation of this idea. Of the actual existence of such a person as Jesus Christ there is happily, as John Stuart Mill admits, not the shadow of a doubt. The New Testament evidence upon this point is corroborated to such an extent by non-Christian authorities that it may be accepted as for all practical purposes certain and conclusive. And that the birth and career of Jesus were, in the opinion of a multitude of contemporaries, associated with supernatural phenomena, is almost equally demonstrable. I am, of course, quite aware that notable attempts have been made from time to time, and especially in our own age, to explain these phenomena as mythological accretions; and the Rev. C. Voysey and others have maintained that science and the Bible together are destined, by their mutual contradiction, to dethrone Jesus; "for science is ever extending, and the Bible is ever contradicting it." But from the very nature of our present investigation, the discussion as to the actuality of the supernatural elements alleged to have existed in the personality and work of Jesus lies beyond its purview. What is now sought to be ascertained, is not whether such things really existed, but whether, assuming for the time being that they did exist, they accord with a tenable theory of Evolution in the nature and ideas of the

race. Should it appear that there is no fundamental contradiction between the assumption of a Divine Incarnation having taken place in such a person and at such a time, and the doctrine of the evolutionary progress of mankind, then evidence will have been obtained strongly confirming the truth of those pretensions which were put forth on behalf of our Lord, and by Himself.

Accepting then, for the time being, the general trustworthiness of the New Testament statements as to the Incarnation, we have to ask, "To what extent can they be reconciled with a reasonable theory of Evolution?"

It is of cardinal importance that the prophetic character of the Old Testament announcements of the Messiah should be noted. They were, from the very circumstances amidst which they originated, anticipations of the fact of the Incarnation leading up to it, but in no instance springing from it. And this is the more apparent when we see how the fact itself, whilst according with these anticipations, was immensely beyond them. Yet in their peculiar reference to circumstantial incidents in the actual earthly life of Christ they stand alone in history. "The strength of prophecy lies in its chain of references to Christ, from the first mention of the 'seed of the woman' to the virgin-born Immanuel;

from the Sufferer, whose heel is bruised in terms of the earliest promise, to the 'Man of Sorrows' in the fifty-third of Isaiah; and from the peaceful Lawgiver of a yet uncrowned tribe to the heir of David, who enters the long established seat of rule as a king."[1]

The remarkable correspondence of these predictions with their fulfilments is at least suggestive of the entire series being dependent upon one common principle; and that this anticipative communion in the central fact of the Incarnation was a moral inspiration and support, not only to the Jewish saints, but to the holy of other nations throughout the world and the ages is, apart from the direct statements of Scriptures to that effect, witnessed to by the confessions of the great religious leaders and thinkers themselves. And that that religion which was bound up with the clearest intimations of the Coming One stands forth to the present day (always excepting its grander sequel) peerless amidst the greater religions of the world, seems to indicate in a most conclusive way that the moral advance and achievement of the past were inseparable from the realisation of the advent of Messiah.

But look at the several elements distinguishable in the New Testament representation of the per-

[1] Principal Cairns, D.D., *Lectures.*

sonality of Jesus, and the principle of development is still further illustrated.

The human nature of our Lord is there in regard to its origin essentially connected with the Past. It is real, even as His Divine nature is, and through His mother from whom it was derived He is, in every respect save sinfulness, subject to the laws of heredity. He shares the heritage of physical infirmity, of mental predisposition, and ethnic peculiarity. The associations historical, moral, and spiritual to which he looks back are those of the Jews. As a man the nature and consciousness of Jesus were differentiated from those of preceding ages, whether of his own or of other races, nationalities, and creeds, just as might be looked for in the average Jew of His day. There are traces of the influence of His domestic circumstances, His early occupation, and His physical and geographical environment observable in Him even to the close of His career. Had His appearance taken place amidst other than the historical, geographical, and spiritual conditions in which it did take place, the whole conception of His personality would have to be recast. In the appearance or customary life of Jesus there was little to distinguish Him from those amongst whom He lived. At no period were His fellow-countrymen at a loss to identify Him as one

of themselves:—"*Is not this Joseph the carpenter's son?*" Save for an exquisitely sensitive temperament, an inward growth, physical, mental, and spiritual, and an abnormally widening consciousness, He takes His place in the ranks of the people from whom He sprung.

It was chiefly as a *moral teacher* that He began to be distinguished from others. It was evident that the central principle of conduct according to which He Himself acted, and according to which He taught His disciples to act, was not the conventional one of His time. His teaching with regard to the requirements of the Law, the obligations of Fasting, and of the Sabbath, and the duration of Temple arrangements and institutions, was peculiar to Himself, and yet it cannot be understood rightly save as an evolution of Judaism determined by a spiritual and more universal principle. The sharp opposition to rabbinic teaching and orthodox religion into which He is thus thrown, whilst it evidently proceeds upon a deeper ground of moral motive and conception than had as yet obtained amongst men, is not to be interpreted as an ignoring or overthrowing of the moral inheritance of the Jews. The Law of Moses is loyally accepted by him as a general *schema* of the moral and religious life: all that He claims as a right for

Himself and His followers is that of more spiritually and vitally interpreting it. His view of moral obligations is an advance upon the Law of Moses, but demonstrably in the line of it. And behind the teaching—its background, indeed, and source —was that wonderful life in which were displayed the loftiest principles of morality. In its history there is visible an evolution alike of the spiritual nature and of the realised groundwork of moral action. Its tragic outcome on the cross, exhibiting as it did an absolute sacrifice of self, is seen to be the necessary outcome of such a personal union of the Divine and the human amidst the environment by which it was surrounded.

From a candid examination, then, of the extant evidence we may infer that in this man the conditions and requirements of a perfect human life on the moral side were absolutely fulfilled. It was not only that judged by the moral standard of the Jews He was "without sin,"—there was a positive affluence of righteousness and love in Him, or, as the greatest of the Evangelists phrases it, "he was full of grace and truth," and "of his fulness we all received, and grace for grace." He stands forth from the common multitude of men as a unique Form, solitary, unparalleled, unapproachable. "We have before us in the prophets," says Dr.

Abraham Geiger, "a succession of noble personages, each marked by an individuality of his own, yet all characterised by a calm grandeur, an unaffected elevation, a fervour and withal thoughtfulness, a boldness and at the same time humble submission, which overawes us, and makes us recognise in them the breathing and influence of a higher spirit. Whence came this? We arrive here at the deep ground of the human soul, beyond which we cannot go; at an original faculty, which works creatively out of its own self without its being borne by an outward impulse." [1] In patriarch, psalmist, and seer Israel had shone forth amidst the nations of antiquity with an unchallenged spiritual distinction. A David and a Solomon had shed an undecaying lustre upon her throne. And far back on the very threshold of her true history as a nation there rises still a majestic Figure, the Lawgiver not alone for her but for all the peoples of earth and time. Yet here is a King, a Prophet, a Lawgiver, who outshines them all. In Abraham, Moses, Samuel; in David and Solomon; in the saints and seers of the old economy we discern a real historic advance towards a higher type of manhood and standard of morality. But as we contemplate them more closely their one-

[1] *Das Judenthum und seine Geschichte.*

sidedness and comparative imperfection—nay, their faults of character and positive acts of sin—preclude our accepting them as exponents of universal and ultimate righteousness. With the advent of Jesus they fall into the background as shadows, prototypes, sketches of "Him who was to come." It is when we view them in their relation to Him, and only then, that we discover their comparative values as links in the chain of moral evolution. He places them *in serie*, and their relation to Him determines their true position for all time.

But it is just because of this full and flawless symmetry of character, this sublime moral elevation, till then unattained, and never since approached, that the Evolutionist is at a loss in his endeavour to account for Jesus from the operation of merely earthly and human elements in organisation and environment. That very measureless *pleroma* of the Spirit of God with which He is credited, whilst linking Him with the great spiritual geniuses of the past, yet sets Him in a place apart. As we ponder the problem of this life, the conviction grows within us that "He who is to be the Head of a new race, which is to be at once Divine and human—the realisation, that is to say, of its primitive type—cannot be simply one of the links of the long chain of natural generations, all tainted

with the evil which has, as it were, become incorporated in a fallen race." [1]

But, it may be asked, Does not this hypothesis of a Divine-human personality in Jesus of itself exclude all possibility of a true evolution? At the outset of our discussion it was claimed that the evolution of the race was not negatived by supposing an intermixture of Divine with earthly elements in the process. That qualification of the theory as applied to the human race admits of very cogent defence. To begin with, it seems imperative that the presence—the immanence, rather—of intelligence should be assumed in the original atoms constituting the matter of which the changing forms of Evolution are built up. It is asking too much of a reasonable mind that it should credit the material atom, or its environment, or both, with the "promise and the potency" of the myriad transmutations and adaptations through which it passes in its wondrous history. Professor Tyndall may tell us if he likes that "the formation of a crystal, a plant, or an animal, is in their (the Evolutionists') eyes a purely mechanical problem, which differs from the problems of ordinary mechanics in the smallness of the masses and the complexity of the processes

[1] De Pressensé. "Jesus Christ; His Time, Life, and Work."

involved"—that mind is a "property of matter," and consciousness a something which "exhibits no solution of continuity;" and others even more daring, if less strictly scientific, may declare that "at the present moment all our philosophy, all our poetry, all our science, and all our art—Plato, Shakespeare, Newton, and Raphael—are potential in the fires of the sun." But such a re-hash of Lucretianism is scarcely to the taste of an age like our own so deeply saturated in spiritual ideas. The more the question is studied, the more inevitable is the judgment that in the primordial atom we have a highly elaborate product of mind. And the mind capable of such a creation must be pronounced no less than infinite. Nor does the hypothesis of a construction and impulse merely initial meet with acceptance as evolutionary science advances. The consensus of opinion increasingly favours the assumption of an immanent principle or force determining the process of evolution in all its stages and moments. Still more incredible is it that the spiritual nature of man should emerge from the interaction of merely physical elements with a physical environment. Turn which way we may, the inference confronts us that such a nature can spring only "from above." If we add to this the fact that the consciousness of the race is instinct

with elements which persistently assert for themselves a Divine origin, the case seems all but made out for an immediate influence of the Supreme Spirit being exerted in the development of the spiritual nature of man. Man has been described by a great religious writer as "a being capable of God." That is but another way of saying that in Him we live, and move, and have our being. *He* is our environment, the true "place of spirits," and it is by the interaction of our spiritual natures with His that we advance in holiness, power, and wisdom. In the plane of Nature in no case are we presented with the perfect type toward which any species of plants or animals approximates; but in the plane of human nature such a type is realised and held forth in Jesus Christ. May there not be a sufficient reason for this in the reflective nature of the human consciousness and in the relation of man to the physical world on the one hand, and to God, in whose image he was made, on the other? That the Incarnation may have been due to the universal presence of sin in the race, by which a *restoration*, and not a mere advance upon spiritual excellence, was necessitated, is a hypothesis at least worthy of provisional acceptance until some better be discovered. That in Christ we have "the culmination of the creation," "under the law of the

ascent of life, and the individualisation of higher and higher forms of spiritual existence,"[1] is true, but it is not the whole truth. The presentation of a perfect human character in such a conjunction has in it a peculiar force, a generative virtue, by which the god-consciousness is centralised in human nature, and becomes the germ of a higher spiritual development than would be possible to it under the less perfect economy which preceded it. Under no other conditions could the law of self-sacrifice be perfectly exemplified, or operate so powerfully upon the human conscience. So John, the greatest of the earth-born, is less than "the lesser in the kingdom of heaven."

That beings so diverse in constitution as Christ and Christians should be incapable of being included in the same evolutionary series has not been demonstrated by those who have most strenuously objected to such a classification. To myself it appears no less conceivable and reasonable that they should, than that a real evolution should be taking place, as so many believe, in the universe at large, although the Infinite Himself is predicated as its start-point, goal, and determining force. Through the Incarnation a vast extension of scale in the evolution of the spiritual life has been

[1] J. Cook, D.D. "Boston Lectures."

effected. It has called into existence a new species of spiritual consciousness, superior to that previously existing, and yet inferior to itself in an immeasurable degree. That the progressive possibilities of the Christian consciousness in the individual have been exhausted is far from probable; but in any case there is a future opened up by the "indwelling Christ" to the fellowship of the redeemed, in which it is to attain "unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;" and the Church is called "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." If, then, the incarnate Christ as an individual member of the series which He crowns represents a personality which is, from the nature of things, unrealisable by the other members, yet is He a necessary condition of the realisation on their part of a new, and hitherto unknown, species of god-consciousness and the spiritual life involved in it. "In the heart of our holy religion," says an acute thinker, "God and man meet in the central glory of Christ's person;" and in the surrounding sphere of inspiration God and man still meet, though in a more deeply shaded glory in the Christianity revealed to us by the "holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The union of the Divine Son with His Father in so far as it was hypostatic or personal

is an incommunicable property, but in so far as it was moral it is extended to all who believe: "The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, *that they may be perfected into one.*"

V.

INSPIRATION AND EVOLUTION.

By the Rev. T. W. FOWLE, M.A.

THERE are some essential doctrines of the Christian religion which may be said to have only an indirect relation to the system of thought or of things called by us Evolution, inasmuch as they lie outside the limits of the territory over which it claims exclusive possession. Such, for instance, are immortality and the Divine life of Christ, which, if true, depend plainly upon forces of which Evolution can give and pretends to give no account; in these cases, therefore, it is enough to show that they are not incompatible with Evolution, nor rendered less credible by it, but have a place and use of their own alongside of it. But with the great doctrine of Inspiration the case is different. For Inspiration is the influence of spirit upon spirit (the Divine upon the human) by means of thought, and our ideas about the thinking faculty,

both as to its origin, its connection with the brain, its development in the history of man, are being profoundly modified by modern discoveries and speculations. We are therefore compelled, if we choose to deal with the subject at all, to show that Evolution will help us to an account of Inspiration which shall be both satisfactory to reason, and also meet the demands and perform the office imposed upon it by religion. A subject so difficult, especially in the present state of knowledge, that only its extreme importance could justify the attempt to deal with it.

It is necessary to observe at the outset that in a discussion of this kind Inspiration must be taken to mean only so much as Christian theology in general is agreed upon as plainly essential to the Christian faith. To ascertain this, therefore, is important, and Evolution helps us to do it.

The special service that Evolution has rendered to the Christian revelation—a service so signal that it may well be thought to outweigh the temporary difficulties and passing prejudices it has raised against it—has been to make it clear that the course of Nature can never by itself afford mankind the materials for a vital and effective religion, that is, can never discover to us a God whom we are constrained to love, to worship, and to trust.

A God who should become an object of faith and emotion must needs make Himself known to His creatures by some communication transcending the ordinary course of Nature; in other words, there must be a revelation, a truth which is the first postulate of the Christian creed, and the proof of which may fairly be thought to start the mind well on in its journey towards belief. By religious Inspiration, therefore, we understand the revelation of Himself by God to man through the only means by which information can be conveyed to beings like ourselves, *i.e.*, the influence of spirit upon spirit by the agency of thought. Somehow or other the Eternal Mind must reach our finite understandings and inform them of that which it is necessary for us to know, if we are to be religious as He would have us to be.

So far probably all are agreed. But then this Inspiration must carry somehow its own authority with it, and it is at this point that the Christian instinct, clearly apprehending this necessity, has begun to construct theories of Inspiration, or at any rate to make assertions about it, which have, it must be confessed, confounded authoritativeness with infallibility. If a messenger comes to me from a friend, or even from a source known to exist, but not hitherto known as having any rela-

tion to myself, it is not necessary to my reception of the message that I should believe the messenger to be infallible, but only that he should be truthful and well informed. It is of course open to any one to say that in order to secure certainty God would be sure to make His messenger infallible, or that, as a matter of fact, He has done so, or that He has promised to do so, but this clearly does not belong to the essence of Inspiration, as we have just defined it.

From the same desire of obtaining authoritativeness the Christian instinct has multiplied the channels through which Inspiration has come to man, and has always ended by claiming infallibility for them. We believe, however, that in the light of Evolution it will be seen that the special information about God comes through the Bible only, and is connected with that specific revelation of which the Jews were the depositaries. At any rate, the exact question with which we have to occupy ourselves is this: Does Evolution explain and verify the process of revelation by Inspiration contained in the Bible? Or is that process in analogy with similar phenomena in Nature and in history? Does it avail itself of the same forces, operate in the same directions, tend to like results? If so, there is good reason for believing that the

same God is working in Nature and in revelation, in law and in grace.

The theory of the growth of the human intelligence which Evolution proposes to us may be summed up briefly somewhat as follows. At a certain epoch there arose beings who were so far different from, and raised above, the animals that they were conscious of their own existence, that is, of themselves as related to external objects, which it is the fashion now to call our environment. From this germ has sprung the human mind, with all its various faculties, characteristics, and specialities. Variations would arise in the one mind common to all individuals, partly from causes impossible to trace, but chiefly from the union of two different minds in the parentage of a third; these variations being found useful for the survival and success, the power and happiness of their possessors, would be preserved, and would be handed down as dispositions that differentiated and modified not merely the texture of the mind itself, but also the form and constitution of the brain, together with all the intellectual apparatus connected with it. Added to this an ever-changing environment would exercise an even more potent influence in the direction of constituting different classes of minds, or different faculties within the same mind, adapting

it to successful correlation with external objects in the shape, *e.g.*, of art, or thought, or duty, or science. And thus would arise the national or race mind by the interaction of similarly developed minds upon each other in a given locality, and by the pressure of the same environment upon one group of minds collected together in a society. In such cases outward objects and events would excite corresponding and appropriate thoughts in minds specially developed to entertain and understand them by means of the various faculties which Evolution has brought into existence.

Hence comes the religious faculty as the correlation of the self-conscious mind with that part of its environment which consists in the presentation of the fact of the Unknowable to reason and experience. Attribute the actual origin of religious sentiments to what you will, let the ghost, the fetish, the sun, the dream, play whatever part they can in the development of religious beliefs, it remains true that it is only because man does not know whence he came and whither he goes, and yet by virtue of his self-consciousness cannot but speculate upon unknown possibilities, that he becomes and remains a religious being. The fact of the Unknowable as related to himself and forming the most impressive and tremendous feature in his environment inspires

religious thoughts as surely as other facts of his environment have gone to make him an artistic or philosophic genius. We may confidently leave to reason to trace the exact steps whereby religion came to be what it is, provided only that reason does not omit the most important factor in the case, and does not confound the origin of certain forms of belief with the believing faculty itself, which belonged to man from the moment he knew that he existed, and knew nothing else besides.

This brings us to the fact, which without exaggeration may be called the greatest in history, that the Jewish nation is the one pre-eminently religious nation of the world, that among the Jews religion reached its highest type, to the exclusion or diminishing of other national characteristics, that they are, in short, the one signal illustration and embodiment of the religious faculty. In the process of mental differentiation, in the origin of new classes or types, this is what happened to them, this is their portion in the field of human activity. If then, in a purely scientific spirit we analyse this phenomenon, may we hope to come to some conclusion as to the nature of that Inspiration upon which at this moment depends the religious future of mankind?

(1.) Among the Jews God was the transcendent feature in their mental environment, the one object that was always being presented to the national and individual consciousness. His existence, rule, operation, will, were never absent from their thoughts as a determining influence. He was about their path and about their bed and spied out all their ways. That which the highest thought in other nations came to regard as the Unknowable, the highest thought among the Jews habitually regarded as the best known fact in the whole world. Hence came a ceaseless flow of thought and feeling, of rules and ordinances, filling their minds with the power and enthusiasm of religious inspiration; they lived and had their being in God as the one external reality by which they were conditioned or "environed."

(2.) The outward reality was correlated with an inwardly prepared disposition or faculty. Without dwelling on the marked physical or mental type which has perpetuated itself through all their eventful history, we merely remind ourselves that the belief that God had called them to be His peculiar people was the thought dominating the Jewish mind from generation to generation, and was transmitted at once by inheritance and education from parent to child. And it must further be observed

that it was not their belief in the past or present dealings of God with them, but in their hopes for His future dealings that constituted the most decisive element in the national religion. The moment any nation tries to live upon its past it begins to die, the good genius of Evolution deserts it for those who have the spirit of progress and the energy of survival. Thus, then, the consciousness of God struck upon their minds in quite a different way from that in which religious ideas impress other people, and produced all that was special in their teaching and conduct, all that differentiates them from the rest of mankind in respect to religion. As an illustration of what is meant it may be sufficient to indicate the contrast between the Jew on the shores of the Red Sea, and the Greek in the Bay of Salamis.

(3.) The actual process by which there came into existence an environment that afforded materials for religious thought, and religiously disposed minds capable of thinking about them, is not at all difficult to discern. As to the first, their history was so arranged as to convey an overwhelming impression that God was dealing with them. By the call of Abraham, but far more by the deliverance from Egypt, the national mind received a definite impression which it never shook

off and which enabled it to see the hand of God in everything that happened, till the mission of Christ crowned their belief with certainty. As to the second, we desire to lay special stress upon the fact that all the Jewish religious heroes and teachers believed themselves called by a definite summons at a definite moment to do the will and proclaim the mind of God. This is true of the long list that begins with Abraham and ends with St. Paul and includes Jesus Christ Himself, who began His ministry after His baptism and temptation with the words "The spirit of the Lord is upon Me." From this moment they had no doubt but what they were in direct communication with God, commissioned to do or proclaim His will, able to record accurately and to think rightly about all the circumstances in Nature or in history which came to them from Him, and which in their minds displayed His glory, announced His judgments, or proclaimed His tender mercies. The outcome of this dwelling upon events believed to be due to the interposition of God by men who believed themselves called to make known His will is the Old and New Testament, the history of Israel and the rise of Christianity.

(4.) From this it is evident that the authoritativeness of Scriptural inspiration depends entirely

upon the question whether the Christian scheme taken as a whole is from God or whether it is one long error of well-meaning but misguided men. If in order to give His creatures a revelation of Himself, God did indeed enter into special relations with the people of Israel, and if He did indeed call their great men to the special task of explaining the meaning of His acts and His government, then in the results of their thoughts and conduct we have all the knowledge that the heart of man desires to enable him to love, serve, and worship God. Let us draw out this important point a little in detail in connection with the central truth of Christianity, the life of Christ and its inspiring effect upon the mind of, in scientific language, the religious genius, and, in religious language, the inspired Apostle, by whom mainly its meaning has been conveyed to mankind.

The causes or conditions that determined the inspiration of St. Paul may be summed up as follows. First, there was the mind and character in which was reflected all the deepest, purest, and most essential religiousness of the Jewish people—a Hebrew of the Hebrews and a Pharisee of the Pharisees. Next there was the presentation by external agency to this consciousness of the fact that the Jewish Messiah had lived, died,

and risen again in the person of Jesus of Nazareth whom he was persecuting. Lastly, there was the ever-pressing and growing question as to what were to be the relations of the Jewish Messiah to the whole human race, and to the future religion of the whole world. Given this correlation of outward environment with inwardly prepared susceptibility of character, moving among circumstances calculated to suggest the most difficult and yet interesting problems, and there is not, we make bold to say, any difficulty in tracing the natural course of St. Paul's inspiration or in accepting it as a perfectly authoritative exposition of the relations of God towards man. In proof of which we suggest the following considerations.

The whole process presents a complete analogy to the process by which truth has been discovered in every department of thought. Thus the presentation of certain phenomena to the mind of, say, Newton, suggests a discovery of the will of God in ordering the relations of material things. This is the specific task of genius, by means of which truth once for all emerges, never afterwards to be questioned, and itself a sure basis of further discovery; in the course of Evolution the hour has struck and the man appears. What chance have later minds of reading the facts more accurately or

solving that precise problem in any other way? If in that crisis of humanity St. Paul had missed the true meaning of Christ's revelation, or to put it in his own analogous words, if it had not pleased God to reveal to him the mystery, is it possible that later minds would have perceived it? Evolution is, in short, one long series of emergencies, whether of fact or knowledge, arising out of the varying correlation of phenomena, which correlation again, protesting with loud emphatic voice against the idea of chance, and disdaining that of fate, points to a Supreme Mind that "calleth things that be not as though they were."

But to this *a priori* credibility that St. Paul was right, and that authoritatively, in his conception of the phenomena presented to him we may add the *a posteriori* testimony that the whole growth and working of his mind lies as open to us, and really almost as persuasive, as a Newtonian demonstration. Given the facts as he received them, and the problem he had to meet, and we can see his mind drawing fresh results and arriving at new truths in the most natural and convincing manner; his logic, arguments, adaptations, distinctions, limitations, are just what might have been expected, and betray at every step the workings of his own personality. There is, of course, an entirely new

and wonderful element in what he says, but that is always the case with the transcending power of genius, which baffles the calculations of ordinary minds, and stamps its own truthfulness and power upon them. And genius is perhaps itself the supreme instance of those unaccountable variations which play so vital a part in the evolutionary process.

But after all, is not the authoritativeness of St. Paul's teaching in all essential things sufficiently demonstrated by the fact that no one ever dreams of questioning it, though some may carry it further than others. Scepticism may allege with perfect propriety that he did not write the books ascribed to him, though to a plain man, accustomed to weigh evidence presented to him in the scales of common sense, the assertion that he did not write the Epistle to the Ephesians seems to be the very despair of disbelief. Or, again, it may allege with much more plausibility that the history upon which St. Paul based his teaching and ordered his life did not occur as he thought it did. But granting—which is undeniable—that the history and person of Jesus Christ were presented to his consciousness in the way in which he says they were, then there is no need (subject to a remark to be made presently) of a further Divine interposition to account

for the *nature* of the inspired teaching which followed upon it, nor any need of a supposed guaranteed infallibility to secure the authority of that teaching for all who accept the facts upon which it is built.

But although Inspiration cannot be adduced to prove the objective reality of the events, *i.e.*, the history of Christ, upon which itself depends, yet we must claim for the foregoing account of it, that it adds credibility to the general arguments for the truth of revelation, and goes far to meet some of the objections with which it has been assailed. But this is a large question, of which it is only possible now to indicate the bare outlines. Thus religious Inspiration is seen to be operating in analogy with Inspiration in Nature generally, and may well, therefore, be traced to the will of the same Creative Power. Again, accurate and careful appreciation of phenomena presented to consciousness is the foundation of all successful working in every faculty, and the intimate connection established by Evolution between the universe out of which self-consciousness comes, and self-consciousness reflected back upon its own source, would seem to secure this appreciation for all the best and truest works achieved by the human intelligence. It is, therefore, in the highest degree improbable

that the men who built up the only religion which appeals to civilised humanity should have been mistaken at the very root of things, and have deduced their doctrines from an environment that had none but an imaginary existence. And once more, it seems impossible that, if they thus built upon a wrong foundation, the conclusions they arrived at should not betray some hopeless inconsistency with the best thinking, the highest morality, and the true interests of mankind; thus, if the life of Christ forms no true part of the realities of the Universe, or if there be no God such as the Bible gradually unfolds to us, then it seems fair to ask how it comes to pass that the religion founded upon the belief in these realities has not long ago perished by virtue of its own inherent falseness. It could have no claim to survival.

The remark alluded to above as necessary to be made to avoid misconception is this: In approaching the subject of Inspiration from the human or natural side, we must not be accused of overlooking the theological or supernatural side which is expressed in the Christian doctrine of the Holy Ghost. Upon the human side we are justified in pointing out that the resurrection of Christ inspired the first Christians with new thoughts and towards

new actions, but the actual history represents that to have taken place, or rather to have been begun, by the power of the Holy Spirit at a given time under definite circumstances. But then the work of the Holy Spirit lies outside the course of natural Evolution, and we have done all that the nature of the case admits when we have established such propositions as these: that Evolution leaves a place open for such work and confesses its need of it; that it is revealed as operating in analogy with the work of spirit elsewhere in Nature; that the probability of a higher unity to be revealed between Nature and grace is strongly impressed upon us. At present we need only remind ourselves that the Holy Spirit called the disciples to their work by the definite act of Pentecostal Inspiration; that as a plain matter of experience He has made, in the case of Christ's life, the naturally transitory influence of events and of character permanent through all ages; that He has also made them universal, *i.e.*, correlated them with humanity as a whole; and finally, that He brings the historical, personal Christ into direct communication with individual souls after an interval of 1800 years, so that Christ's presence has become to devout believers the most essential and predominating part of their mental environment. For this

Evolution cannot account, but neither is it called upon to gainsay the fulfilment of that promise of Christ, which constitutes one of the—perhaps unconscious—prophecies attesting the presence of the Divine power at work in our midst—"He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

VI.

EVOLUTION AND IMMORTALITY.

By the Rev. W. F. ADENEY, M.A.

IT may clear the ground at the outset if I state that although I have set down the two words "Evolution" and "Immortality" in juxtaposition at the head of this paper, I am not aware that any close or visible relationship between them has ever been made out. The evidence in favour of the theory of the evolution of physical nature moves along an entirely different road from that on which the proof of the immortality of the soul travels. It may turn out that the one subject has no more connection with the other than the question of the origin of the Nile with that of the duration of sun-heat. At all events for the present, as it seems to me, they traverse widely-separated fields of inquiry. It is necessary, however, to consider the two subjects together, if only to demonstrate this fact; for it is not obvious. On the contrary, there is a

vague feeling afloat among us that Evolution may have something very discouraging to say on the subject of immortality. On the surface there are objections to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul which seem to be suggested by the very idea of Evolution. Whether, in glancing at these objections, we come to see that immortality might emerge in some series of development, or whether we fail to discover any bearings of the one upon the other, in either case the burden of the difficulties will be lifted if we are brought to the conclusion that it is not within the province of any believable scheme of Evolution to pronounce a veto on the Christian doctrine of a future life.

On the surface, I have said, there are objections to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul suggested by a contemplation of a scheme of Evolution. In the first place, the unique rank of man in the order of creation appears to be endangered. Evolution brings him into close relations with the animal world. We are to trace our ancestry back to the *Ascidians*. Not able to claim kinship with such intelligent races as ants and bees we are said to be descended from a creature very like the common earth-worm.[1] Death is the fate of all our animal

[1] Haeckel. "Evolution of Man" (English Translation), Vol. I., p. 251.

relatives, and death is our fate. It is scarcely pretended that they have in them that which survives the decay of the body; how then can we claim to possess it? What right has the child to a nature that is not found in the parent? Further, according to the doctrine of Evolution, Nature abhors a revolution as much as she was said by the older naturalists to abhor a vacuum. She progresses in orderly movement. She walks; she does not leap. But it is difficult to conceive of a gradual Evolution of immortality. Either the individual being comes to an end with the stopping of the animal machine, as the watch ceases to tick when the spring is broken, or it continues to exist apart from the dead organism. I do not see how we can imagine any intermediate condition, for even the pagan notion of an underworld of dim shades grants what is essential to the idea of immortality as surely as the Christian doctrine of a strong, full life beyond the grave, since it asserts a continuance of individual existence after the death of the body. But a power thus to exist after the bodily organism has suffered dissolution is a tremendous addition to all that we can predicate of creatures in which consciousness is strictly limited to the concomitant activity of physical structure. Have we not here an enormous leap

—a chasm by the side of which the distinction between fish and mammal, mollusk and insect, and even that between plant and animal, sink into insignificance?

Now it should be noted that these objections which are flung across the path of faith in immortality from the comparatively new ground of Evolution, are in essence old objections. For everything that can be urged through the theory of Evolution applies equally to the facts of Embryology. In his work on "The Evolution of Man," Professor Haeckel has drawn out an elaborate comparison between what he believes to be the history of the development of the race and that of the growth of the individual. After studying his tables of comparison and his parallel diagrams, the reader cannot fail to be impressed with the close resemblance that is there shown to exist between the successive stages of embryonic growth and the rising orders of the animal kingdom. Whether as a race we have descended through generations of animals may be a question, but that as individuals each of us has passed through the condition of a cell, a worm and a fish—though not the fully developed forms of these creatures—there can be no doubt. The question of the relation of immortality to Embryology was discussed long before the days of Darwin

and Spencer. The two difficulties noted above apply to this subject as closely as to the development theory. Can we predicate an immortal life to an untimely abortion? If not, then at what stage of the fœtal growth does the immortal nature appear? Is it reasonable to suppose that the ovum is immortal? If it is not, must there not be a sudden leap into an entirely new power when immortality is acquired, and this while the human organism is growing by gradual and imperceptible stages? The objection is exactly the same. Nay, it is stronger in the case of Embryology. For here the progress is more rapid. We are struck with the rise of a man "From Log Cabin to White House," but we are not surprised to learn that the remote ancestor of the most exalted personage in a great nation was a man of humble origin. It is more remarkable that immortality should emerge in the few months of the growth of an individual in the uterus than that it should appear in the course of the dim ages of a vast series of successive species. The facts of Embryology are not newly revealed. They have been long before the world. Yet in full view of these facts Christian thinkers have been able to hold a doctrine of immortality. If Embryology has failed to disestablish the doctrine, much less should Evolution do so, seeing that

Evolution can be made to fight against it only with the very same weapons and at an immensely longer range.

Nevertheless we cannot dispose of the difficulties in this cavalier fashion. To show that they have a wider range and a more ancient origin than is at first apparent is by no means equivalent to demolishing them. Moreover, the new suggestions of Evolution revive the old difficulties of Embryology; they emphasise them and bring them into fresh prominence. Evolution is more openly discussed, and its leading facts have worked their way more freely into the popular imagination. Consequently although, strictly speaking, it does not contribute any new objections to the doctrine of immortality, practically it does tend to raise perplexing thoughts in regard to that doctrine. At all events, it compels us to face the old difficulties once again.

Of all "idols," that of tacit assumptions is the greatest hindrance to sound reasoning. It is assumed that on the hypothesis of Evolution a community of nature belongs to all orders of beings, and it is assumed that Evolution demonstrates the smooth and gradual transition from stage to stage of development. But no proof has yet been forthcoming to establish these posi-

tions throughout the whole range of existence, nor at its most critical stages. According to the scheme which Mr. Herbert Spencer sketched out in his "First Principles," of the development of the solar system from a condition of diffused gas into the present state of sun and planets, with the vegetable and animal life of our earth, there must have been more than one appearance of novelties which would be quite as striking as the emerging of a life that was able to continue in existence after the dissolution of its physical organism. Life such as we know it could not have existed in the primeval nebulous universe. We are brought to this dilemma: either there was once no life, in which case an entirely new thing must have appeared when the first germ was formed; or the conditions of life must have been wholly inorganic, and then the transition from life in a mass of diffused gas without form or substance to life in an organism would be equally startling. But I believe that this alternative has never been seriously advocated. I understand the advocates of the nebular theory of the origin of the universe to hold that there was a time when life did not exist. Sir William Thomson's ingenious suggestion of a meteoric invasion of life from other regions of the universe does not affect the case.

It only throws the question further back, to the first beginnings of life somewhere. Again, there is the question of the origin of consciousness. Whether consciousness arose with the first germ of life, or whether it was superinduced at a later stage of the development of organisms, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the first appearance of it must have been a distinctly new event in the gradual growth of creation. Indeed, for my own part, I should say that the appearance of consciousness was a greater event than the emerging of immortality. Immortality is the continuance of consciousness after physical death. The first dawn of feeling and thought is the most marvellous stride in advance of the condition of a world of blank unconsciousness—blind, deaf, impassive. The power of continuing individual thought and volition after the dissolution of the body is also, doubtless, a considerable step forward, but, as it seems to me, a less momentous step. Further, we come upon the facts of self-consciousness. Hartmann has brought together a striking series of analogies in favour of his fancy for the consciousness of the vegetable kingdom.[1] The late Professor Clifford was even more daring in suggesting

[1] "Philosophy of the Unconscious" (English Translation), Vol. II., ch. iv.

the existence of a universal diffusion of "mind-stuff" corresponding to the whole universe of matter. But it is not pretended that these lower forms of consciousness, if they exist, have anything like the self-consciousness of personality which we discover in ourselves. Hartmann does not venture to predicate a unity of consciousness in a tree. The most that he imagines is a separate spark of consciousness in each of the myriads of cells in root, branch, leaf, and flower. It is difficult to conceive of what "mind-stuff" could be; but the nearest approach to an intelligible conception of it would suggest that it was the element out of which a higher consciousness was to be formed. The further we permit the imagination of physicists to posit the existence of consciousness, the more marked and certain will the distinction between this dim elementary consciousness and the self-consciousness of the human personality become. The knowledge of personal identity in memory, the power of directing the current of thought, the originating efforts of will—these things differ *toto cælo* from the dull sense of uneasiness or satisfaction which is about the most that we should venture to affirm of a cell. Here again an enormous stride has been taken. At some time in the ascending order of life, mere sensation has been superseded by

self-conscious personality. The appearance of life in the universe, the dawn of consciousness, the existence of self-consciousness, are all of them indications of great novelties parallel to the novelty of immortality. If the gradual evolution of organisms has been consistent with these several introductions of new forms of existence, is it unreasonable to suppose that it may be consistent with the supervention of a power of surviving the shock of physical dissolution?

Even among the facts of present observation we meet with analogies to this appearance of the new power of immortality in the vast domain of a mortal universe. Thus there must be vibrations of air too rapid for detection by our ears, so that if we had finer ears many sounds now inaudible would be perceived. As the rate of these vibrations is reduced, there comes a point at which they are able to impinge upon our sensory faculties, *i.e.*, there is a moment when they first touch consciousness. Similarly, a comet is invisible to the naked eye when travelling towards the sun from remote regions of space; but at length it is near enough to be detected by some sharp-sighted person. For that person there is a point at which the invisible becomes visible. Again, when one's tooth is suffering from caries, an irritating action is set up that

worries the nerve into pain. Before this, the disorder was below the level of consciousness, but in the aggravation of its symptoms it has at length touched that level. There must be some point at which this happens—a stage at which one begins to feel toothache, however mild the beginning may be. A finely-balanced scale turns suddenly when the minutest addition is brought to either side of it. As soon as a vessel of water is full, it suddenly begins to overflow, although it is being fed by a continuous and changeless stream. So may it not be, that when the continuous stream of life and consciousness rises above a certain level, it overflows the limits of mortality, and acquires the power of persisting after the death of its accompanying organism? It would seem that most forms of life are not sufficiently stable to hold together apart from the physical structure in which they are involved. Whether the structure has secreted the life symptoms, or whether, as seems more consonant with the facts, the life power has built up the structure about itself, it is still, apparently, too feeble to continue in existence after the walls of its house have crumbled away. It is so interwoven with the fabric of its physical habitation that the dissolution of this fabric brings about the extinction of its own existence. It has not

sufficient stability to continue in a state of vital nudity. We have no proof of this fact, and we must bear in mind Bishop Butler's cautious remark, that we do not know that animals are incapable of surviving death. Still the reasons that induce a belief in the immortality of the human soul do not apply to the merely animal world. But it is by no means contrary to analogy to suppose that a being should have appeared with sufficient vigour of vitality and sufficient substance of mind to stand the shock of the dissolution of its corporeal environment, and to be able either to continue to exist in an immaterial world, or to gather about itself the elements of a new organism.

There is one characteristic of our own natures which seems to be essential to this power of continuing in existence after the death of the body. In regard to a being that does not possess the idea of personal identity, or the self-consciousness of personality, the very notion of immortality is illusory. The identity of our body is simply a historical identity. Every element of the body has changed several times over during the course of a lifetime, and yet the body is regarded as one and the same throughout, just as Herod's temple was treated as identical with the temple that Haggai knew, because the rebuilding was gradual

and was carried on side by side with the demolition of the several parts of the old structure. But when once the body has been destroyed, even the gathering together of all the elements from the grave, according to the old notion of the resurrection, would not result in the perpetuation of the same body. It would be a new body after dissolution, though made out of the identical elements of the old body, while before dissolution the sameness of the body is preserved, though the materials out of which it is constructed are in a continual state of flux. If, then, the living being that inhabits the body has no element of identity in itself, the dissolution of the body would seem to involve the cessation of its individual existence. But if it has such an element the case is entirely altered. The self-conscious personality becomes the basis of a possible immortality. I do not regard this as in itself a promise of immortality, for I see nothing in the idea of a self-conscious personality to forbid its own extinction. But it is a ground of possible immortality; *i.e.*, it is no longer impossible for immortality to be predicated of a being that possesses this condition, as it would seem to be impossible to predicate it of one that had no personal identity apart from the bodily organism.

This point may be made clearer if we return for a moment to a previous position. The lower we place the appearance of consciousness in Nature, the less stability must we credit it with, because we thus remove it further and further back from the limit of self-consciousness. The supposed conscious cells of a tree cannot be thought to have any sense of personal identity. If, at the death of the tree, the vital power that is then liberated enters into new forms of life, we have, indeed, a case of a certain sort of immortality. The vital power still exists and works. It is not put out of being. So if there should be "mind-stuff," then, while the stock of it is not reduced, we have again a kind of immortality. This just corresponds to the indestructibility of matter. It goes with the whole course of Nature to say that what once existed will always exist. But in these cases the absence of the self-consciousness of personal identity, robs the idea of immortality of what to us is its most valuable attribute. What we see here is at best a type of the transmigration of souls. Metempsychosis without memory is practically identical with the persistence of force, excepting that it denies to certain vital forces the liability of being transmuted into alien forces—light, heat, &c. It asserts that vital force is persistent. But

this seems to be contrary to known facts of organic decay, although the recently discovered bacilli and bacteria bring us very near to it. In these cases, however, the essential characteristic of all that we value in immortality is missed. The stream of consciousness is not unified by the sense of personality. The advent of that wonderful form of consciousness revolutionises the whole scene, and lays a broad foundation on which a genuine immortality may be based.

It will be said that in all this I have adduced no evidence in favour of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. It is all surmise and possibility. True. We cannot establish the doctrine from a consideration of the analogies of Nature. The use of these analogies, however, is not the less important. It is, as Bishop Butler pointed out, to remove objections. If it can be shown that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is not so contrary to the constitution and course of Nature when viewed under a scheme of Evolution as is sometimes supposed, then the difficulties which are felt on this account must be lightened. To establish the truth of the doctrine, we must approach it from an entirely different point of view. It is not a question of physical investigation. If it were so, it would be an impertinence for any one who

was not an expert in physics to meddle with it. But it does not belong to the range of physiology. It is a question of psychology and of theology.

It seems to me that while Evolutionists claim the functions of mind to come within the course of development, and while they are working out problems of sociology and politics on this hypothesis, they must be proved to be wrong before it can be asserted that mental functions do not fall within the range of Evolution. But, meanwhile, the case of the structure of mind is different. In the physical world Evolution is traced through organic structure as well as through functional activities. In the mental world it is being applied to function, but it has not yet been shown to apply to structure. The nature of the human mind presents a problem which, at present, simply confounds the Evolutionist. When, however, this mental nature is studied on its own account, it does not vex us with silence. We can know ourselves to a considerable extent, and in considering the great mystery of immortality, it is the *ego* that is known in experience, apart from the investigations of Evolution, that we are concerned with.

When we think of the enormous impetus that has been given to the study of physical science in the present century, it is not at all surprising that

the stability of a truth that is based on a foundation wholly outside the range of physics should be brought into question. The naturalist not only sees that death is universal from the centurial elephant to the ephemeral fly; he discovers nothing in the development and constitution of living organisms that is independent of the universal mortality—no minute gland or cell that might be the germ of revived energy. The whole fabric dissolves into inorganic gases, salts, &c. The revival of frozen fishes and the awakening of dried germs are not in any way parallel to the immortality of the soul, because, though functions may have been long suspended, organic structure has not been injured. So-called analogies like that of the butterfly and the chrysalis are merely picturesque illustrations, and not true analogies at all, for they are cases of development and growth —not of death and resurrection. If Nature is silent in regard to immortality, we are not to be surprised that the exclusive study of Nature should leave the idea of immortality shadowy and doubtful. But it will be a great point to have come to see that Nature has nothing to say against the immortality of that which is above the range of material structure. Then we are free to look to the positive evidence for this truth in its own

region by the study of the moral nature of man, the Fatherly government of God, the words, life, and resurrection of Christ. In particular, it is very significant that though our Lord revealed few details of the future life, His language in affirming the existence of that life was unmistakably clear and unhesitatingly positive.

VII.

EVOLUTION AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL.

By the Rev. JOHN MATTHEWS.

HERBERT SPENCER says of Darwin—"His reasonings show us an unconscious mingling of the belief in a supernaturally impressed tendency to develop, with the belief in a development arising from the changing incidence of conditions." In the concluding pages of "Animals and Plants under Domestication" Darwin speaks of the "Omnipotent and Omniscient Creator, who ordains everything and foresees everything." He stoutly maintained that his theory was quite consonant with the doctrine of design in Nature. His accounts of the fertilisation of orchids by insects, and, indeed, all his writings, abound with language that implies contrivance, adjustment, pre-established harmony between life and its conditions. He states in one paragraph—"How interesting it is to contemplate a tangled bank, clothed with many plants, and to reflect that those elabo-

rately constructed forms, so different from each other, and dependent on each other in so complex a manner, have all been produced by laws acting round us. There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms, or into one; and that while this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed laws of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms, most beautiful and wonderful, have been, and are being, evolved."

There is in these words a far fuller recognition of the Divine personality than you can find in the writings of Herbert Spencer, with their reasoned agnosticism and their deification of mechanical energy. It is only fair, however, to the present Evolutionist school to say that they are showing signs of dissatisfaction with the Spencerian agnosticism and its half-mechanical, half-metaphysical postulate of energy as the explanation of Nature and history. The widest divergence on these points from the master has been expressed by Mr. John Fiske, a most ardent admirer and disciple of Mr. Spencer, on the purely scientific side of his work. In his latest book, "The Idea of God as affected by Modern Science," Mr. Fiske attempts to show that his present theistic and Christian attitude was fore-

shadowed in his earlier writings; though many of his readers would be disposed to demur to this, and to reply, that if it were so the theism of the early writings was quite neutralised, if not swamped, by agnostic associations. Let us, however, rejoice to welcome Mr. Fiske as an ally, and let us hope, also, that his great teacher may, on this subject, condescend to learn even from his brilliant pupil on the other side of the Atlantic. In the event of such a reconciliation, neither Mr. Spencer nor Mr. Fiske would be able to discover the theistic elements in the early Spencerian writings. The prescience and the comprehensiveness are to be credited mainly to Mr. Fiske. His attitude probably points to an early harmony between science and faith on the principle that law, force, environment, selection, and evolution are all modes of the action of the Supreme Mind, and that the development of life and the progress of mankind demand for their sources and factors a personal, omnipresent God, and such a revelation of Him as we have in Christ. Evolution does not simply relate itself to theism or pantheism as a loose ulster fits a man six feet or a man five feet six. It adjusts itself to Christian ideas in a more vital way, as the muscles are correlated with the nervous system in the body, and the bony structure with the muscular. The evolution

of Christian civilisation cannot be explained apart from the past and present work of Christ in the hearts and consciences of men.

The harmony of Evolution with the Christian ideas of creation, providence, the character of Christ, and a future life has already been shown. It remains for us to note a few particulars in which a Christianised scheme of development would throw light on the problems of sin and evil. It is sometimes asserted that the doctrine of development ignores, not to say negatives, the Christian idea of sin. This is by no means a consequence of accepting the Darwinian belief. Evolution does not deny the evil and criminality of sin, and the pathological condition it has set up in society and our circumstances. It emphasizes these facts, and by its assertion of the law of continuity, and the conservation of energy, and the law of the multiplication of effects, it declares that all want of correspondence with environment, and all violations of the law of progress, are attended by results of a momentous and lasting character. On these points it is far more ethical than some popular theories of the atonement which ascribe to the death of Christ a *direct physically* causative power. It affirms with Dr. Martineau that "sin is the choice of a lower line of action in presence of a higher pos-

sibility." It discovers to us the free will of man, ay, his own personality, beset by evil ancestral residua in the body, by social aggregates of evil, by the remains of barbaric ideas and usages in the theologies, industries, and politics of society. It affirms that the law of all existence is struggle and progress. It points us, on the other side, to the ascending social and spiritual environment Christ's kingdom has secured for us. And it demands, as the law of duty, not some vast abstract idea of right, but that we reject the lower and choose the higher as it comes to us day by day. The failure to do that is sin—the eternal antagonist of good, the parent of nothing but disease and death. The spiritual environment that surrounds us is ever advancing to more complex and elevated forms. Not to adapt ourselves to these later and more perfect unfoldings is sin, necessarily entailing paralysis, failure, decay. Physical death is the consequence not only of general want of adaptation to environment, but often follows from the failure of any chief organ so to adapt itself. The full attainment of life in all its compass and possibility demands the adjustment of every organ and power to the environment that is accessible. The same law applies to the spiritual kingdom. Sin with the Evolutionist is not some Adamic

liability incurred for us by the act of another. It is the recognition of progressive light and power without us and in us, and the deliberate refusal to adjust our nature to that larger light and increasing good. This was the sin of the Jews in our Lord's day. It was the temptation that constantly assailed His disciples. To live in accordance with an older and narrower economy, to rest upon and use worn-out beliefs, no longer representing reality, is sin, followed close by atrophy and death. To rescue us from such torpor, and to stir all our energies to respond to and react upon the forces of the kingdom that encompasses us is the aim of the work of the Holy Spirit of God. In the prosecution of that work the Christian Evolutionist believes that the Divine compassion and power will not finally fail, but will unfold a perfect universe, and will perfectly adjust to the glories of that new creation all the powers of those who are not persistently rebellious, as "perfect music is matched to noble words." At the same time, science refuses to admit that any good can come out of sin *per se*. The universe owes it nothing but hatred and expulsion. The original constitution of the universe, in the view of science, is so perfect and so full of the proofs of God's goodness, sacrifice, and pity, that the slightest deviation from its laws is in-

finitely foolish and wrong. The modern ascription to sin of great beneficial power, and the estimate of it as the condition of God's love, the incarnation of Christ, and even of the existence of civilisation, as Dr. Bevan, in a recently published volume of sermons on Christ and the Age, has asserted, even going so far as to affirm that "the very power to partake in the Divine nature is the result of the human fall," is in our judgment utterly unethical and unscientific. The purpose of the Divine interposition in the work of Christ is to realise the original idea of God in the creation of the human race. Christ's incarnation, civilisation, by which we mean the supremacy of mind over the material world, and the use of its resources for the welfare of the community, are part of the primal purpose of God, to be fulfilled in any case, whether the world is obedient, or partly obedient, or wholly sinful. The moral state of mankind of course helps to shape the form in which these objects are fulfilled, but the substance of the purpose is to be executed in any case. The presence of sin in the world has retarded and clouded the glory of the manifestation of God's love, and checked the progress of the race intellectually and physically, as well as spiritually. It is impossible for perfect natures ever to view such an evil with other feelings than regret. It is

equally impossible for us to understand how free and active personalities can be prevented from sinning, if they deliberately elect to make that use of their freedom. Such statements as those of Dr. Bevan proceed upon this error: they do not sufficiently take into account the ordinary, limited, dependent state even of obedient, sinless man, and the necessary conditions of his development by struggle and sacrifice, as evoking such revelations of Divine pity and sympathy and sacrifice as must attract the interest of all higher orders of beings. The Divine sacrifice is postulated in the very ideas of creation and providence. Science teaches us that much we have been taught by superstition to call evil is good, and a condition of the development of moral character. Storms, earthquakes, changes, extreme heat and cold, are not evils. They are part of the original purpose of God, and the means of the training and discipline of life on the earth. A finite being, such as man was originally, beginning at a humble point, with all his progress to be reached by struggle and denial, in such a world as ours, must have needed, even as a sinless, loyal soul, the revelation of God's sympathy, the inspiration of His Spirit, the advent of Christ; and would certainly have had these blessings more perfectly as a holy soul than as a sinner. The

primary equipment of the universe provided for *all* the needs of growing life. All exceptional manifestations and miraculous interventions only reveal the eternal goodness and sacrifice of God, on which we are to build, when the occasional has passed away. It was not necessary for the prodigal to go into a far country and become a swineherd to find out the father's love. Continued obedience at home would have revealed that love more fully, and with a depth of inward peace more blessed than the rapture of forgiveness and the welcome home. The Cross is the masterpiece of God's wisdom, not only as securing the means of the forgiveness of sin, but likewise as a power arresting, localising, and preventing sin. And this conception is in accord with all ethical and mental science, neither of which can find anything in sin but lasting disadvantage to the person and the world. The growth of Christ's character from childhood to His perfect manhood, conditional upon constant effort, denial, suffering, yet utterly free from all sinful taint, is proof enough that sin is no necessity to finite beings, in such a world as this, however severely they may be tempted. If sin, then, has no such causative power for good, and if the world was organised for the benefit of obedient wills, how are

we to explain the signs of disease, suffering, cruelty, death, which have marked the whole progress of life on the earth? Are we to accept Bushnell's theory that, in prevision of the fall of Adam, God, to fit the world to fallen man, and to make all creation a mirror of his restless spirit, made the animals, and serpents, and parasites, with all their deadly weapons and poisons and treachery? We can hardly see the wisdom or necessity of such a course, and we cannot see how it is to be reconciled with the Divine benevolence. If all the suffering that has been experienced by the animal creation through incalculable ages has been designed in order to reveal man to himself, why has not greater provision been made to convey to the higher creature the precise extent and intensity of that suffering, that he may learn gratitude to his benefactors? Besides, the acts of animals are all of an instinctive, automatic character, while man's are of a different quality, being the products of free, rational, and responsible beings. Such a theory will not bear examination. It is equally absurd on scientific and ethical grounds. We cannot hold with J. S. Mill that the phenomena of Nature call for a dualistic explanation; that they are the results of the antagonism of two equally powerful beings. We cannot accept the conclusion that the

existence of evil proves either that God's goodness is defective or His power restricted. Philosophy and revelation, the instincts of the heart, the conclusions of the reason, compel the belief that God is absolutely perfect.

The blended thought of Paul and Darwin throws light on the mystery. The realm of Nature is the scene of perpetual struggle and sacrifice for the progress of life, for the discipline of energy and character, beginning with the lower forms of life and ending with man. That process which we call evil the Creator accepts the responsibility of, and provides for its sufficient compensations. The issues that will flow from it, the uses to which it is turned, will amply vindicate and glorify His goodness when all is explained. Meanwhile the universality of the law of sacrifice, from which no life escapes, and to which even the Highest bows, suggests its profound necessity and helps us to submit to it. In this early stage of growth we find that our deepest peace springs from our greatest pains. What compensations eternity will afford do not yet appear. Christian Evolution, then, views sin as the bane of existence, for which the creature only is responsible. But the conditions of the growth of progressive beings, through ignorance, weakness, and struggle to perfection, are eternally fixed by the Creator.

He accepts the responsibility for them, and, connecting them with direct and blessed manifestations of His goodness and high ends of creatural good, His method stands for ever justified.

A transfigured doctrine of evolution also throws light on what is called the fall of man. Paul, in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, shows how the Evolution of law carries with it transgression and conscious sin: "Howbeit I had not known sin, except through the law." "Apart from the law, sin is dead." "And I was alive apart from the law once; but when the commandment came sin revived, and I died." This is the record of his own experience, and that of all men. It supplies us with the key to the interpretation of the Adamic fall. If no law had been imposed on Adam there had been no sin and no fall. But the time in man's development had come, when a greater wrong would be inflicted on him if he is not trained by law than if he has law and breaks it. The third chapter of Genesis gives us an account of the first application of moral law to man in the form of restraint. Concurrently with the progress of law there is going on within him a development of the moral sense. Put these three factors together—desire, law, conscience—and you have, when the law is

traversed, the phenomena of a conscious fall. Man judges himself, condemns himself, and has therefore attained a higher life. The prehistoric man has no such experience, is under no moral law, blunders and errs as a child, but does not know it. Directly the primitive customs necessary to preserve life have been developed to the moral stage, and man is dealt with as a being possessing a moral nature, he becomes conscious of the folly and criminality of deeds he had not felt as sins before. He condemns himself, negatives the past, refuses to fall back to it, creates a new future, beholds the increasing law of the future, and presses forward to its fulfilment. The evolution of the moral sense of nations and communities is regulated by the same law. There is first a period of childhood, of unconscious, wilful energy, unregulated by law. Then comes the recognition of higher obligations, and the awakening of a new moral sense. The old policies and wars and usages are condemned. The nation repents of its past misdeeds. It cannot repeat them. All its energies are concentrated in the effort to realise new ideals and obligations.

VIII

EVOLUTION AND THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF SIN AND REDEMPTION.

By Rev. Prof. CHARLES CHAPMAN, M.A.

THE description placed at the head of this article admits of a twofold sense: it may mean the bearing of the scientific doctrine of Evolution upon the doctrine of Sin and Redemption, as set forth in the Bible, or the Evolution of the doctrine of Sin and Redemption, in the historic form of the Sacred Writings. The one awakens the inquiry, What is the effect of the current view of Evolution, supposing it to be true, upon our ideas of Sin and Redemption, as those ideas are believed to be embodied in the teaching of the Bible? The other starts the question, What are the characteristics of the gradual evolution of the ideas of Sin and Redemption, as we find it traceable in the Biblical documents? Thus it will be seen that the one question raises a possible controversy between science and theology; while the other proceeds on the assumption that

the principle of Evolution in all things is accepted, and that our present business is to notice its illustration in the steady progression, in the Bible, from some germinal idea of Sin and Redemption to that full form of the doctrine now held by the Christian Church. The distinction thus drawn between the different interpretations that may be put on the heading of this paper is important, because, while the phrase is in common use, and on that account is adopted, the treatment of the subject required in the two cases must be totally different, and could scarcely be comprised within the limits now at our disposal. I may say, once for all, that my present purpose is not to deal with the purely theological question of the development, or, if the ambiguous expression be preferred, the "evolution" of certain doctrines in successive documents known as Biblical, but with the bearing of the scientific doctrine of the Evolution of man, supposing it to be established, on the accepted views of Sin and Redemption—whether, in fact, it is destructive of those views or compatible with them, or whether those views can and must be modified so as to square with what is affirmed to be an established fact in the order of Nature.

At the same time, inasmuch as we have to deal with scientific ideas, I may as well say that, in my

judgment there is a very loose employment of the term "Evolution" by some theological writers in reference to what really does not admit of the application of the term in the scientific sense. I can readily fancy how some of our ardent scientific men may be delighted to observe the eagerness with which popular preachers and writers seize hold of their favourite term "Evolution," and teach that in the Bible there is an Evolution of this and that doctrine, and, in fact, that Christianity itself is an Evolution; but the delight is blended with much amusement as they notice how utterly unlike their Evolution is this Evolution of doctrine. According to the scientific view, Evolution is nothing if it is not pure naturalism; it is the gradual passing of a purely natural thing, under the influence of a purely natural environment, into a higher form of existence. All the elements entering into the higher type were previously existing in Nature, and by hypothesis there is no room for anything but Nature. Evolution is simply a name for a process in the action of purely natural forces. If, then, we use scientific language, with its proper scientific connotation, and speak of an Evolution of Biblical doctrine or of Christianity, we at once exclude every supernatural element—we shut off of necessity all direct Divine action. If, on the

other hand, we use the language in a *non*-scientific sense, *i.e.*, if we include in it an element not found in pure naturalism, then it is of no value for the purpose for which it is generally adopted, namely, that of showing that the rigid principles of science hold good of the doctrines which as Christians we hold. For instance, the Evolution, in the scientific sense of the term, of the doctrine of Redemption would mean, that in the early records of the Bible there is found a dim notion, purely natural in origin, of getting rid of an evil; that in the course of ages the natural action of human thought and effort, combined with social influences, so acted on this primitive notion as to cause it to expand, and that still later a similar process, purely natural, went on till there evolved the full Christian idea of Redemption. A natural environment, acting on a natural idea, evolved a natural result. Had there occurred at any points in the history of mankind any specific Divine acts of Revelation, or of Incarnation, the chain of simple Nature would have been supplemented; and however much men may have worked up ideas on these acts, the so-called Evolution of Revelation, or of Incarnation, would have been as unlike the usual scientific Evolution as the Resurrection of Christ is unlike awakening out of sleep. The Evolution of our idea of a Revelation,

or of the Incarnation, is one thing; the Evolution of Divine teaching on these subjects, or of the things themselves, is another. Divine teaching may consist of successive acts, each of which adds some item to the sum of religious knowledge; but it is a misnomer to speak of the Evolution of Divine teaching, *i.e.*, of Revelation. Scientific men do not understand such a use of language. There is, I know, a school of naturalistic theologians; but their handling of the Bible is anything but natural, and, consequently, truly rational. It is neither good for literature nor theology to use scientific terms as though in the use of those terms we were in harmony with science, when, in reality, we mean what science can never attain to, and that, too, without any disparagement to its real value. Nor does it much improve the position to say that, as a fact, there is in human experience the general action of the Divine Spirit on the human spirit in the course of the struggle of life, and that this being a common factor in the history of the race, it must be included in the environment which, acting on the germinal ideas in man, causes them to evolve into the more perfect form of Christian doctrine; for, while we may freely admit the fact of such Divine influence, it is obvious that in so doing we have got outside the scientific circle

of the necessary co-ordinated series of antecedents and consequents which constitute Nature. That there is a progression in the development of doctrine in the Bible is unquestionable, but what I would emphasize is, that it is not an Evolution of doctrine in the sense which strictly scientific men attach to that term, and that it is misleading to make such a free use of it in popular literature.

In considering the bearing of the modern scientific doctrine of Evolution on the Biblical doctrine of Sin and Redemption, it is first of all desirable to understand clearly the sense we attach to the terms employed. So far as concerns Sin and Redemption, it is not necessary for the purpose immediately before us to enter into an elaborate statement or exposition of the various shades of opinion in the theological world as to the nature, origin, and effects of Sin on the one hand, and the necessity, nature, and application of the redemptive work of Christ on the other. There is, if we exclude the strictly naturalistic theology, which only by courtesy can be called Christian, a general consensus of opinion respecting the teaching of Scripture on these two cardinal points:—a consensus which allows room for considerable diversity of judgment when we attempt to frame theories of Sin and Redemption. Recent years have witnessed

some valuable accessions to our list of standard works on the theology of both the Old and the New Testament, thus laying a foundation for the elaboration in the future of a more perfect body of systematised theology than at present exists. According to the conclusions arrived at by modern Biblical theology, and I may add, in the main, by the most judicious investigators of former times, Sin is regarded as an act, a state, and a tendency —as an act it is the individual assertion of selfhood against the law and authority of God; as a state it is a condition of alienation from the holy nature of God; and as a tendency it is a force which, left to its own course, must issue in destruction of body and soul. In other words, Sin is antagonism to God and universal, moral, and physical order; it is the degeneration of a spiritual nature, and renders the being in whom it dwells liable to the most terrible punishment. On the other hand, Redemption is regarded as a Divinely originated means; a process and an issue; having its centre and finding its value in the person and work of Christ. As a means it is the life, the sacrifice, and intercession of the Son of God; as a process it is the effectual application of His work to the actual necessities of man by the co-operation of the Holy Spirit, and as an issue it is the realisation

in the individual and the race of the end for which the economy of grace was instituted, namely, the attainment of the spiritual perfection which consists in conformity of nature to the nature of God —the restoration of the lost harmony. Thus it will be seen that both Sin and Redemption involve spiritual relations—the varied relations of the individual human spirit to a personal God. The one implies a breach of relations, and the other a restoration of relations. They both imply a direct action of will in respect to Divine Will, and the recognition of moral law; while Redemption implies, also, a supernatural provision by which a breach of relations may be healed.

In indicating what we are to understand by Evolution as affecting these views of Sin and Redemption, it is necessary to bear in mind the distinction I have made in another paper of this series between Evolution in the most absolute sense and Evolution as applied to account for the origin of specific forms of life on the globe. There is much curiosity in some quarters, and anxiety in others, as to what modifications may be impending in the current views on Sin and Redemption consequent on the supposed truth of the doctrine of Evolution. It is not possible to deal with this state of mind satisfactorily unless the distinctions

I have elsewhere made are kept clearly in view. The answers that must be given to the prevalent questioning will differ according as we are thinking of Evolution as held by Mr. Spencer or as held by theists. If we take the former, and regard Evolution as the method by which undifferentiated ultimates of matter, under the action of force, have become differentiated and integrated so as to give rise to the physical universe as we now know it, and if all this is but the manifestation of an Unknowable Reality of which Personality cannot be predicated, then it is useless to talk of Sin and Redemption in the Biblical sense of those terms, seeing that there is no God whose Will is law, no Sin as a rebellion against an intelligent Ruler, no Incarnation of the Son of God as a means of Redemption, and, in short, no revealed supernatural religion. Mr. Spencer must smile at the ignorant attempts often made to harmonise Christian doctrine with Evolution as he holds it. The only effect of his view of the universe is to annihilate Revelation and Christianity. Any attempt to tone down the Christian writers with the hope of lessening the antagonism to the scientific position, and of disposing him and his followers to accept a modified Christianity, only reveals the unfitness of those who make it to enter into the arena of higher

apologetics. Of course if he is right in his account of the nature and origin of things, there is no Sin, no Redemption, no Revelation, and we may as well save the breath we spend in controversy on these subjects. If the battle is to be fought out it must be by prior conquests, as I have indicated, in the regions of Cosmology and Psychology. It is no use discussing questions of Theology till you have a God, and you cannot settle the question of a God by settling the question of organic Evolution.

It is when we leave this higher ground and come down to the less pretentious forms of Evolution that we are in a position to discuss the possible effect of prevailing views on our Biblical Theology. It is organic Evolution, as held by theists, that raises the controversy respecting certain points in Theology. Assuming, then, that the *non*-theistic view of unlimited Evolution is untenable, and that, given the existence of a Supreme Being who takes an interest in His intelligent creatures, there is a Revelation of some kind contained in the Bible, the real question before us is, What is the natural and necessary effect of the theory of organic Evolution, supposing it to be true, upon the conceptions we have hitherto been led to form concerning Sin and Redemption from a study of the contents of

Scripture? The answers given to this question are rather discordant. It has been assumed, on the one hand, that necessarily Sin, in the theological and hitherto supposed Biblical sense, ceases to be a reality, and as a consequence that Redemption, as held by most Christians, is a fiction. On the other hand, it has been maintained that, granting the truth of organic Evolution, there results no essential difference in the conceptions we are warranted in forming of the teaching of Scripture upon these two important subjects. Between these extremes there have been efforts to show how the modern scientific doctrine of organic Evolution qualifies our interpretation of the record as to the origin of Sin in this world, and how, by its confirmation of a universal natural order, it suggests that the Incarnation of the Son of God should be regarded as an event more natural than it has hitherto been supposed to be, but that otherwise it does not affect the general theological position.

Now it is not possible to ascertain the truth in this matter unless we first of all determine the particular view of organic Evolution that is entertained. It all depends on the place given to man in the theory of Evolution as to what theological consequences we are compelled to accept. There are three possible positions for man in this respect,

and if we would treat the subject now in hand with any degree of rigour, and so avoid the confusion of thought which unfortunately is too prevalent, we must confine sole attention to them in successive isolation. Man may be within the range of organic Evolution, wholly, or partially, or not at all. Let us take each of these views into consideration in an order the reverse of that just stated.

Take, then, the supposition that man is not included within the scope of organic Evolution—that he, being the head of all creatures, has been directly, truly created, while all the rest have evolved, according to a Divinely ordained law, out of the simple primordial germ of life. That this view is entertained by a few Evolutionists is well known. They think that while there is strong cumulative evidence in favour of Evolution up to man, there is a striking failure in the evidence adduced with respect to him. They, among other considerations, reason thus:—According to the doctrine of Evolution by minute individual variation from specific forms, an immense number of variations must occur through a long series of generations before natural selection can fix the best of them into new species. The differences in even mere physical development between the

highest known species of the ape and the lowest style of man are such as to imply the prior existence of countless hosts of intermediates; while the enormous difference of 28½ cubic inches of cranial capacity suggests a still more remarkable succession of minute variations before a creature equal to the highest known ape could pass into human form. But while the very nature of the case necessitates such a long succession of intermediate forms, not one, either living or fossil, has ever been found. Moreover, the very conception of natural selection, or survival of the fittest, implies that in the struggle for life some of the strongest would be likely to survive; whereas the fact is, that while we have actually living the lower, inferior forms, such as the orang and chimpanzee, there is no trace of any of the superior anthropoids that must have existed in considerable numbers had man evolved by intermediate links from forms co-ordinate with the orang and chimpanzee. Thus the fittest to survive have perished, and the lowest and weakest have survived. Now, doubtless, those who hold by Evolution all along the line of life may reply to this, that, great as the gap is, time may help us to bridge it, especially seeing that discoveries in tropical lands and strata are more possible in the future than they have been in the

past. Still it is not reasonable to treat such reasoning as though the men who employed it were either fools or knaves, and the more so as it was chiefly on this ground that Virchow ventured to set his great authority against the attempt to teach the Evolution of man in German schools as a settled scientific fact. It may be that those who thus hold to the doctrine of the special creation of man may have to face the awkward fact of supernatural isolation as compared with the rest of the organic world; but they are in the habit of pointing to the origination of the ultimates of matter, the first creation of life as distinguished from molecular interaction and the Incarnation and Resurrection of the Son of God, as instances of the same kind of Divine action in unfolding the economy of Providence. Their position may be ridiculous to the man who denies the existence of a Free and Almighty Will, or who formally admits such existence, but practically ignores it by holding to the paradox that an Almighty and Free Will only can, and does, act along necessary, unmodifiable lines; but to the candid, consistent theist, whether he can accept it or not, the position will appear as, at all events, perfectly reasonable. It will then be obvious that those who thus see their way to accept organic Evolution as coextensive in its

range with all life except that of man can be consistent Evolutionists and at the same time hold to the entire content of Scripture as to Sin and Redemption, and also accept one or the other of those theological formulations of these doctrines which have hitherto prevailed among the different schools of Christian thought.

Let us now take the supposition that man is included within the scope of organic Evolution—only not entirely; in other words, man as an animal is evolved from lower forms. According to this view it is the higher nature of man that is directly created. The evidence in favour of the Evolution of the bodily structure is taken as adequate, but the moral and spiritual *differentia* of man is such as to preclude the supposition that, as a responsible being, he is only an outgrowth of brute intelligence. The higher free nature of man is regarded as belonging essentially to a place above the natural. Otherwise there would be a lack of logical congruity in assigning the origin of one part of him to the natural order, and another part to the supernatural act of God. It is just here that questions arise which lie outside the range of physical science; and it is on this account that those who count physical considerations sufficient to solve the whole problem of human life regard with disdain this

attempt to separate man, as a whole, from the operation of the great organic law of Evolution. Thus it is that the old Augustinian controversy of Traducianism and Creationism has come to the fore, divested of its well-worn theological form. It is perfectly vain to expect the opposing parties to come to terms. Dr. Matheson's well-meant effort[1] to harmonise the supposed direct production of the human spirit by the power of God with the general principle of the Evolutionary theory falls far short of the mark, for it is not a question of the higher spiritual nature and the Evolutionary process, by which the animal structure arose, having a common source in the one Eternal Force, but whether the Eternal Force formed the higher part of man directly or by the same process as the rest. The scientific man affirms that there is only one method for the whole nature, and that to suppose one part to be through a process and the other to be direct is to introduce dualism in the order of the universe. The diverse views are thus separated by essentials. Their *data* are utterly different. It is a question of the nature and place of the human spirit in the universe. The naturalist may smile at the attempt to settle the question by what he calls a flight into the misty region of metaphysics;

[1] *Vide* "Can the Old Faith Live with the New?" pp. 190–195.

he may pride himself on the more simple matter-of-fact method of physical science. On the other hand, the spiritualist may pity what he would call the narrow, one-sided, and inferior view of human nature that sees in man nothing more than a civilised brute; and he may well doubt whether such easy, ready-handed solutions of the gravest of problems are consistent with a sound philosophy.

Be this as it may, our present concern is not with the validity or invalidity of the view taken, but with the bearing of it, on the supposition of its truth, upon the Biblical doctrines of Sin and Redemption. The general effect of holding this view of Evolution would be to leave theology untouched, but yet to render necessary a modification of the popular interpretation of the record of the origin of man's structure and of the fall, and of the subsequent Apostolic reference to it. The fact of the existence of Sin and of a Divine remedy for it in no wise depends on our possession of any exact literal historic record of the precise circumstances under which it at first entered our world; nor would our estimate of the nature of Sin and the consequent nature of the Divine remedy be materially affected were the existing record to be interpreted in a representative, or allegorical, rather than in a strictly literal sense. The existence of

Sin is the sad basal fact of all human history; its essential nature is a matter not exclusively of revelation, but of our inevitable moral intuitions; and the clear sense of our Lord's and of Apostolic teaching is, apart from all question of their deciding critical points, that Sin came into the world in the first instance by the fault of primitive man. It is, I think, quite possible, in view of the subsequent Theophanies, with their necessary implication of direct Divine intercourse with individual men, and especially of the Incarnation and the evident tests of the second Adam, to work out a rational and consistent defence of a literal interpretation of the narrative of the fall. At the same time, seeing what a haze of mystery hangs over these primitive records, those ought not to be regarded as necessarily off the lines of reality who think that the whole evidence available for the case points to the conclusion that, with respect to the circumstances of the first appearance of Sin in the world, Scripture sets before us a great fact in representative colours, very much in the same way as it does in the later books of the New Testament the great realities of the future life.

We come now to the last alternative, namely, that man in his entirety is included within the scope of Evolution. According to this view man's

entire nature—that which he has in common with lower orders, and that which he is believed to possess in advance of theirs—is the simple outcome of an Evolutionary process, as truly, and in the same sense, as the anthropoid ape is the outcome of that process working upwards from the lowest form of life. Man is interpretable by the same methods as the ascidian and the lemur. Philosophically speaking, he is a natural product. There is no dispute as to the fact of man's qualities being immensely superior to those of the highest creature below him; but it is strongly maintained that, however high we may rate man's spiritual powers, and with whatever dignities we may invest him as a free moral being, all this is explicable by the hypothesis of a slow and steady progression from the sensible and emotional life peculiar to the animal world. Moral choice and obligation, the two terms which are supposed to indicate a spiritual nature and a capacity for Sin and for fellowship with God, are but designations for the fact that in man, as we now know him, there are the consolidated and registered experiences of his long line of human and brute ancestry. With what acuteness of reasoning this has been attempted to be shown by Spencer, Darwin, and Haeckel is well known. It would seem that those

who accept this view of human nature are quite logical in their conclusions when they say that, from the nature of the case, a fall such as we read of in Scripture is out of the question; that Sin, with the connotations usual among theologians, is a misnomer, and that a specific provision superinduced in the course of human history for the removal of such sin and restoration to a lost purity is not only foreign to the orderly course of Nature, but a reading backwards of the page of Evolution, which starts with the imperfect and passes on by slow and steady progress to the more perfect. It is not to be wondered at that, entertaining such views of the nature of man, and the genesis of moral choice, men should see in Evolution a theory of the universe directly antagonistic to the Biblical doctrines of Sin and Redemption. They seek no reconciliation because they conceive that their fundamental conceptions of the genesis of man admit of no common *data*.

The fact is, that the real difficulty in the matter of organic Evolution and Theology lies in the conception we are bound to form of moral obligation, if we can, indeed, form any at all, in case man be simply a being evolved from the primordial form of life. The question is started whether, on the supposition of his being only the evolved product

of bestial life, barring all supplementary action of the Eternal, there can be such a thing as an eternal moral obligation binding on man, and a moral nature different in kind from anything possessed by the superior animals. It has been most elaborately argued that conscience and our sense of moral obligation are only rather more refined and developed forms of reference to tribal interests than what still governs the actions of animals. The swift intuitions of right and wrong are but the result of registered experiences, and contain in them no more essential element of eternal right than may be found in the duty of an antelope to warn the herd of approaching danger. The flippant abuse of those who cannot accept Evolution of the entire man, which we too often observe in controversial writing, is no contribution to the solution of the problem. There are manifestly attributes ascribed to man in the Bible, responsibilities imposed upon him, and lofty spiritual privileges to which he is invited which *primâ facie* seem inexplicable if his origin be only what some affirm. The chief authorities on Evolution, Spencer, Darwin, and Haeckel, have shown extraordinary acuteness in endeavouring to prove that what is best in man is only the natural growth of what is best in the brute; and I think it will be

admitted that they have found this a much more onerous undertaking than the endeavour to connect man's structure with lower forms. Those Christians who hold to the Evolution of the entire man have taken on themselves the enormously heavy burden of proving that the truly spiritual nature of man, as represented in the Bible and known in the most sacred and deep experiences of life, can be, and is, an evolved product from mere animal sensibility; and that moral obligation, as involved in the Biblical idea of sin, and known in man's sense of accountability for his own internal condition as well as outward acts, can be, and is, evolved from an antecedent condition of life, in which, by hypothesis, there is not one iota of moral obligation. For, be it remembered, moral obligation is not a refined utilitarianism; it is *sui generis*. Indeed, some of the most cogent arguments against organic Evolution in its application to the entire man, and, therefore, in favour of the special creation of the spirit of man as suggested by the peculiarity of the narrative (Gen. i. 24, 26, 27, cf. ii. 7), have been those founded on the nature of moral obligation, and the consequent nature of the being to whom it applies. I am not here arguing the case one side or the other, but simply endeavouring to point out the bearings of the diverse views;

and I say that if the theory of the Evolution of the entire man be true, then the Scripture doctrine of Sin and its consequent Redemption cannot be held in the sense usually recognised in the Church of all ages, unless it can be shown, *first*, that man's higher nature can well have come from the nature of the lower animals; and, *second*, that moral obligation can have gradually emerged out of mental conditions in which not one iota of its real nature is to be found. It will not do to tone down man's nature as it is known in our profoundest experience, and as it is set forth in Scripture, and say that it is simply a little in degree above the nature of a dog as evinced in loving fidelity to his master; for spiritual discernment, capacity for God, the awful prerogative of moral choice, ideas of the Absolute, and recognition of an eternal right to which we are for ever amenable seem to involve radical differences in constitution. Mr. Spencer has said, with respect to moral obligation:—"I believe that the experiences of utility, organised and consolidated through past generations of the human race, have been producing corresponding nervous modifications, which, by continuous transmissions and accumulations, have become in us certain faculties of moral intuition, active emotions, corresponding to right or wrong conduct, which have

no apparent basis in the individual experiences of utility." But Mr. Spencer ought to have seen that, supposing this were the genesis of what we call "faculties of moral intuition, active emotion," we have not here the creation of a "right and a wrong" which is absolute and eternal. Their having "no apparent basis in the individual experiences of utility" now does not disprove that they had only a basis in experiences of utility in past generations of human and animal life; and there is nothing in the "nervous modifications" of ages, which are purely physical changes with corresponding sensibilities, that can convert experiences of utility into an eternal and absolute moral obligation.

There are a few, though not conspicuous as theologians so much as popular writers, who, entertaining such a view of the origin of the spirit of man, logically have abandoned the conceptions of Sin and Redemption formerly held, and, I may add, necessary to any consistent interpretation of the facts and statements recorded in Scripture. In such a system Sin is a name for a constitutional infirmity; it is a venial failure in the subordination of the lower instincts to the higher; and as such a failure is dependent entirely on the nervous modifications of the structure, which again depend on the environment, it is essentially the same in

its character as a failure to see clearly, to hear correctly, and to walk firmly. In such a case Redemption can only mean an arrangement of the social environment, by the action of which we may hope to evolve into a state of more perfect mastery of the animal passions. Any such thing as guilt, in the true sense of the term, or of free moral choice as a permanent reality in our nature, or of real atonement, is inadmissible when the nature of the theory held is thoroughly understood by those professing to hold it. Nor can there be any bearing of Sin and Redemption on another life, seeing that the existence of the entire man is due to a physical process, and stands or falls, therefore, with the structure. It will not do to appeal to Scripture, and say that we hold true ideas of guilt, of moral choice, of atonement, and of a future life; because even Scripture cannot put into man's nature what is, by reason of his declared genesis, not a part of the man. On the other hand, the most reasonable conclusion seems to be, that if there is anything clearly taught in Scripture on Sin and Redemption inconsistent with a certain view of the Evolution of the higher part of man's nature, the probability is that there is a flaw somewhere in the proof of the Evolution of the entire nature of man from lower bestial forms of life.

IX.

EVOLUTION AND THE BIBLICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF GOD.

By the Rev. Professor CHARLES CHAPMAN, M.A.

THE time was when the knowledge and treatment of scientific and theological subjects were confined to trained minds, and were discussed in terms precisely understood by reader and writer. One advantage of this was that, however much men might differ in the conclusions arrived at, they were agreed as to the essential points at issue. But it has come to pass, by reason of the broader character of our modern literature, and the higher average culture of the reading public, that the most abstruse and difficult subjects that can engage the human mind are now so set in popular form as to deprive the terms employed of the rigid accuracy of meaning which they once carried, and, indeed, do now carry, with those who have the time and capacity for a thorough mastery of the questions involved. There is doubtless ultimate gain to the

interests of truth in the circumstance that our higher class popular literature, and sometimes even the daily press, abounds with eloquent essays and speeches on the origin of all things; but meanwhile we suffer from the inconvenience of a confusion of tongues, and greatly need to be reminded that much writing on difficult themes is not a guarantee for clear and cogent thinking. The most conspicuous instance of this uncertainty of language is, perhaps, to be found in the popular use of the term "Evolution." For a thousand persons who are prepared to talk glibly on Evolution, there are, perhaps, not a dozen who can discriminate between the various areas of fact over which the term may be understood to range. To one accustomed to a close and continuous study of the great problem of existence, as it has been propounded and dealt with from the earliest Hindoo systems, on through the pre-Socratic Greeks up to the more modern scientific developments of Kant's pregnant suggestion, it is both amusing and painful to observe how much energy is spent by writers and readers in discussions which can bear no good fruit, for the sufficient reason, that while there is much fervour of argument, it coexists with a blindness to the fact that the idea entertained of Evolution may not be commensurate with all the facts presupposed by the

idea of Theology. It is, for instance, often imagined that what is called Darwinism is utterly at variance with the first principles of Theology, whereas it does not touch them. Darwinism has to do only with the method of originating specific organic forms. It leaves both the primary truths of Theology and the possibilities of a Revelation untouched.

If, then, we are to say anything rational on the relation of Evolution to Biblical Theology, it is desirable to lay down some clearly defined sense in which the term Evolution is here employed. Although the literature on the subject is now vast, yet we shall not be wrong in stating that all the diverse views of Evolution may be classified under two divisions—RESTRICTED and UNLIMITED. The *Restricted* would include all those expositions of the facts of Organic Nature which seek to account for the existence of all forms of life by a process of differentiation from the first simple germ. They assume the existence of a primordial form of life, and never profess to solve the question of what order of things antedated its appearance on the globe. Whether there be a God or not, whether matter be eternal or not, whether all things antecedent to the appearance of life, and also subsequent, have their root in one Reality or not, these are great questions on which they are silent. They

have no more to do with the ultimate causes of things and the relation of the Eternal Power, or Eternal God, or, if so it pleases, the Eternal series of phenomenal changes, to the present order of things, than has the gardener when he discourses to his friend on the stages and means by which a pea passed from its seed form to the developed pod. The most Christian man on earth and the most thorough-going Atheist may equally hold some such view of Evolution without thereby sacrificing their respective creeds and notions. They have to do simply with the bare facts of animal life. The Atheism of Mr. Bradlaugh would not be established by such a view of Organic Nature, nor would the Theism or Christianity of the Archbishop of Canterbury be weakened. The horror with which some have regarded the theory of Organic Evolution, *per se*, is an illustration of the fact that its actual bearing on the most vital of all truths—the existence of a Supreme Being and the gift of a Revelation in Christ—is not understood. Some have credited it with a necessarily antichristian and even anti-theistic basis, whereas, as a theory of life, constructively or destructively, it has nothing to do with either Christianity or Theism. In so far as the originators of this theory postulate the first germ of life to be created, they are by implication Theists,

and the method by which they teach all other life to have come from the first life is, considered in itself, independent of any theological or anti-theological element—it is simply a statement of an asserted order of facts in the organic world.

But while a distinguished class of scientific workers have only committed themselves to this restricted view of Evolution, they differ among themselves as to the precise law according to which it takes place. Thus Darwin and Wallace regard "Natural Selection" as the chief factor, though the latter excludes the appearance of man from its operation. On the other hand, St. George Mivart thinks that "Natural Selection," even when sustained by "Sexual Selection," is inadequate to account for the actual facts revealed in the history of life on the globe; and he, therefore, prefers a view which gives more room for the relatively sudden appearance of specific forms. And although Professor Owen, in the exercise of that caution which is so characteristic of him, has not formulated or worked out any counter theory, yet he, in his Palæontology, when taking a review of the vast fossiliferous record, indicates his doubts of the sufficiency of "Natural Selection," and also suggests that probably the successive appearance of graduated forms is to be ascribed to an

"ordained becoming" under the continuous operation of a secondary cause.[1]

But far more important in its bearing on Theology is that view of Evolution which I have described as *Unlimited*. According to this the principle of Evolution, without a break either in time or space, is applied to the entire universe. Of course the beginning of time is a metaphysical question, but if ever there was a beginning, then the elementary undifferentiated condition of things then existing has been subject, through almost infinite ages, to an evolution by which the primordial simplicity has issued in the ordered universe we now behold. Or, if we take the alternative and say there never was a beginning in time, then, with this eternal background, one of two views is held:—the one, that from an eternal and inconceivable simplicity, and by a marvellously slow process, the present order of the universe has come into existence; the other, deeming such an eternal simplicity a metaphysical absurdity, that there has been an eternal series of cycles of evolutions and dissolutions—changing simplicity into complexity, and *vice versâ*—in the midst of one of which we happen to find ourselves. The essence of this view is, that the universe, by a process very

[1] "Palæontology," p. 3, cf. p. 403.

slow, came from a *minimum* of simplicity to its present form. Starting almost from zero, things have come to an almost infinite complexity. No atom of matter, no point of space, no conceivable existence, no idea or feeling in the past or present, has been free from the action of this omnipresent principle. There is no single gap in the rigid retrocession of natural sequence and antecedence. We may pass in thought step by step, as along a well-ascertained road, from the most gifted human genius back to the undifferentiated ultimates which must be assumed to have been the sole form of existence in the beginning; and as we pass back we find that each item is the evolved consequent of a more simple antecedent and nothing more. Both Natural Science and Logic demand continuity. While, however, this is that unlimited view of Evolution which by the splendour of its scope throws Darwinism into the shade, just as a whole diminishes the importance of a part, it must not be imagined that its advocates are agreed in its representation. Indeed, a little reflection will show how inextricably metaphysics are blended with any attempt to explain the physical origin of things, and how inevitable, therefore, it is that the boasted certainty and clearness of Positivism yield to uncertain and questionable speculations.

There are two distinct schools of extreme evolutionists, and we cannot deal satisfactorily with the relations of Evolution to Theology unless we mark these schools off one from the other and indicate which of them we are more especially concerned with. In the one school may be included all who, like Haeckel, Büchner, Voght, and Strauss, postulate matter and mechanical force as constituting all that is; who, in contravention of the most assured law of molecular physics, even go so far as to affirm that thought is the sole product of molecular motion. In the other school must be reckoned all who, following the teachings of Mr. Herbert Spencer, hold that, at the base of all phenomena, and as the causal explanation of the facts of matter and mind, there lies an Eternal Reality—unknown and unknowable as to its nature, but known in so far as it is the assured source of all phenomenal existences. They hold to One Reality, of which matter and mind are the two-faced manifestations. According to the former school there is no Eternal Cause and no Mind except in a crude materialistic sense; according to the latter an Eternal Cause is a primary *datum*, and what we call Mind is a name for the series of states which is one of the two forms in which the One Reality manifests itself, matter being the other.

Mr. Spencer is not a Materialist, and his theory of Evolution is not related to Theology in the same way as is that of Haeckel and Büchner.

Yet it is obvious that each of these views of Evolution stands in a more or less antagonistic relation to the Biblical representation of God. The theory held by the school of Haeckel clearly leaves no place for the existence of a Supreme Being, any more than for the existence of a real mind in man. Bold Atheism is its God-ward, and hard Materialism its man-ward, description. The only way of dealing with it argumentatively is to begin on the human side and show that, by making thought to be the outcome solely of molecular motion in the brain, you violate the law of the conservation of force; since, in such a case, force in motion, on becoming thought, parts with a portion of itself, and so the total amount of mechanical force is diminished—contrary to the great scientific law; while if, on the other hand, it does not part with a portion of itself, and yet gives rise to thought which is not transformed molecular motion, you have the absurdity of force in form of molecular motion absolutely creating a new thing entirely unlike itself. Having thus wrested mind from materialism, we may next ascend up the line of phenomena, and by the principle of causality demand the existence of a real

cause of the phenomenal order. Having done that, we virtually come to the position held by Mr. Spencer so far as concerns the existence of an Eternal Reality.

As a consequence of the discussions of the past few years on this subject, the air is cleared of much that was murky and close. We see exactly where we are. We know exactly what that form of the unlimited Evolution theory is which has been most philosophically elaborated, and which among men who understand what they are about is regarded as the system of thought that takes the most reasonable position against Biblical ideas. I believe that the whole of our modern controversies on Evolution and Theology hinge on the position taken by Mr. Spencer in reference to the One Reality and its relation to the twofold order of phenomena—the mental and the material. If that position is unassailable we may cease to write books on Apologetics—the case is closed. Neither the smartest epigrams nor the keenest logic will give Theology a rational basis. It is a case in which first principles are at stake.

Now, in considering this theory of Evolution in its bearing upon the Biblical representations of God, we ought carefully to note that we have nothing to do with the fact, or with the degree, of the evolu-

tion of the solar and stellar systems from a primitive condition of things in which matter existed in simple form. There can be no objection to Cosmical Evolution, provided a beginning is postulated that satisfies the reason. The Bible itself indicates a process of change from elemental to more complex forms. The extent over which the principle of Evolution is to be applied—in other words, whether there are any breaks in the chain of continuity—is a question of detail, and involves for its decision a consideration of ascertained facts. But that in the Evolution theory which we have now more specifically to deal with is what I may term its causal element. In crude materialism there is, strictly speaking, no causal element, for all is eternal phenomena. The Lucretian "fortuitous concourse" is only a phrase. There is no "cause" in the case. "Chance" is not a *power*, but a name for a certain irregular appearance of phenomena. It is indicative only of our ignorance. But in Mr. Spencer's system it is the causal element, which he makes so prominent, that alone bears on the Biblical doctrine of God. He virtually makes it a substitute for what theists hold to be the sole explanation of the facts of the universe. Reduced to a brief formula, the real question at issue is the ascertainable characteristics of the primal cause.

Let us, then, notice what there is in common between the One Reality, which is the causal element in the theory of unlimited evolution, and the Biblical account of God. Both in the "*First Principles*" and in the "*Psychology*" the position taken is that beneath, and as the ground of all that is knowable, there is One Reality, of which, in the truest sense, existence may be predicated. Though less abstract than the τὸ ὄν of the pre-Socratic Greeks, the One Reality is substantially the subject of their thought. The terms employed to indicate it are varied, and critics may find occasion for the exercise of their skill in the One Reality being also described as the Unknowable, the Absolute, the Ultimate and Unknown Cause, the Eternal Power, Absolute Being, Force, the Inscrutable. But no gain to truth can arise from quibbles over words. No impartial student of Mr. Spencer's works can fail to see that, apart from fit or unfit terms, he is not dealing with a phantom of the brain or a bare abstraction of thought, but with the fact of a real existence—an actual base and ground of all phenomena. And it is just here that we find a remarkable correspondence between his teaching and that of the Bible. Assuming for the present the term "God" to be non-connotative of Personality, it is obvious that the sacred writers

were, when using it, thinking of exactly the same thing as Mr. Spencer. Throughout the Bible God is represented as the real, permanent ground of all other existences or modes of being. Job could easily have adopted the term "the Inscrutable" to indicate his idea of the unsearchableness of the mysterious source of all things. The thought running through the Bible is well expressed by such words as "Of him and through him are all things." All else is conceived as transitory, dependent, mere appearance—"vanity." We owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Spencer for the persistence with which he has vindicated, against Positivist and sceptical schools of thought, the fundamental principle of Biblical Theology, namely, that an Eternal One *is*. Whatever differences on other subordinate views may still separate him from us, I am persuaded that the deep conviction entertained of the existence of One Eternal Reality, and the reverence naturally begotten by that conviction, afford a reasonable ground for the hope that, in due time, the reconciliation of Theology and Science will be attained.

Not only is there a fundamental agreement in holding to the truth of One Eternal Reality, but there is the further agreement which consists in the fact that both regard the One Reality as an operat-

ing cause. With Mr. Spencer the One Reality is much more than the logical completion of an order of thought in the retrogressive line—more, that is to say, than an ideal origin of a series of events. It is an actual cause—"an actuality lying beyond appearances"—of all that is and has been in the history of the universe. Aristotle could not have surpassed the matter-of-fact way in which the Reality is variously set forth as the source and explanation of all phenomena. The Eternal Power works, and its energy is the rational account of all changes. Now, although the Bible does not employ the term "cause" in the philosophic sense, it nevertheless represents the relation of God to the universe in substantially the same way. No reasonable doubt can be thrown on the belief that בָּרָא, *bara*, as applied to the beginning, means to create, though there is no need to add the inaccurate expression, "out of nothing." But apart from etymology, it is evident that the whole drift of the representation of God's relation to things is that of Originator or Cause. The conception of a prior Power is utterly alien to the entire teaching of the Old and New Testaments. "Without him nothing became that did become."

Further, this Sole Cause, this Eternal Reality, is, according to our modern authority, both transcen-

dent and immanent. It is distinguished in fact and in thought from the ceaseless flow of phenomena that owe their existence to it. It lies beneath and beyond all we see and feel and hear and think. Where they are it is, but is not included in them. It is transcendent. Likewise it is *in* all phenomena. What we see and feel and hear and think are simply manifestations; they have no reality, no power of self-existence or of continuance. Apart from the continued action of the Power which originated them, they would vanish as surely as that the shadow vanishes when the sun and the object disappear. The history of philosophy shows how frequently ideas recur under new forms, and in this immanence of the One Power giving relative persistence to phenomena we cannot fail to see essentially what is known as the Cartesian "continued creation." All that is is the expression of a Power, and things are but the forms of that Power. In so far as they abide before consciousness, they abide by virtue of the persistent action in the same form of the Power. In so far as phenomena are not independent, but are forms of the Power, the One Reality is immanent in phenomena. Here, again, we have in other phrase essentially the Biblical idea of God. Everywhere in the Bible the appearances which we now call Nature

are conceived as having in themselves no inherent capacity of continued existence. They are simply forms of the Eternal Power. God is the pervasive energy: "In Him all things consist." All things are upheld "by the word of His power." By Him the "mountains stand fast." So close is the connection of the Eternal Power with things that God is said to be "in the storm," and to "ride on the wings of the wind," and even to *do* the things which we in ordinary language refer to the action of natural laws. It has been a charge against Old Testament writers that they frequently ignore the operation of natural law, and conceive of God as constantly performing miracles. But the fact is, that when they speak of God "sending hail and frost," and of "watering the earth," they are as far from thinking, after the example of the savage, of the arbitrary action of a Being outside the order of things as is Mr. Spencer; they are only using bold language to set forth their idea of the presence and action everywhere and in everything of the Eternal Power. They believed in the immanence in Nature of the only Efficient Cause.

Thus far we have seen agreement between the causal element in Evolution and the fundamental Biblical representation of God. We have now to look at the point of divergence. One sentence

may express the point at issue:—The predicates affirmed in Scripture of the One Reality, under the name GOD, are withheld by the evolutionist, with the necessary exception of those which imply power, presence, and duration. It is not for me to justify the term "unknowable," when one can speak of it as power, omnipresent and eternal. Mr. Spencer's negation, however, of intelligence and will raises the question as to what the One Reality is, if not these. He persuades himself that he is meeting all the facts of the case, and is conforming to the necessities of thought by simply saying that of the nature of the One Reality we know nothing, and cannot know anything. It is presumption to say what it is. One would like more consistency between the form of denial and the actual arguments employed. For in the "First Principles" it is said of the Reality, we can "neither affirm nor deny Personality,"[1] and also that it may be as far above "intelligence and will as these transcend mechanical motion;"[2] and yet the whole drift of his argument, in all his works, is to "deny" that Personality can be affirmed, and it is in this fact of denial, sustained by elaborate reasoning, that we find a repudiation of Biblical ideas. The argument developed with

[1] Page 108. [2] Page 109.

much force in his various works seeks to make out that it is absurd to suppose, as is taught in the Bible, that the One Inscrutable Reality can be Mind or Personality. The term Personality is not the best, perhaps, that can be used for the purposes of such a discussion, because of its misleading connotations; but the question before us really resolves itself into two elements, which may be considered separately, namely, one of *nature* and one of *act*. In various ways the Bible declares what God *is*, and what God *does*. He is a Free Mind and He creates. The extreme Evolutionist denies that either of these can be predicated of the One Reality. What is the ground of this denial, and what its validity?

The ground[1] of the denial that the One Reality is Free Mind may be put thus: Mind, as we know it, is purely phenomenal; it is as truly phenomenal as are colour and form and hardness. Mind is simply the name we give to the sum of serial states which make up human experience. It is as transitory as the sum of material qualities which make up the volume of a river. The different items in the mental series are but "manifestations" of the Inscrutable Reality in the same sense

[1] I have put into as brief form as possible the reasoning running through all Mr. Spencer's works.

as are the different items in the physical series. It is therefore irrational to suppose that the Reality itself, of which they are but "manifestations," can be the same as they are. Such a conception, were it possible, would involve the annihilation of the distinction of Reality and phenomena. Mind implies change, imperfection, progress, and acts that are restricted by conditions. Moreover, as mind consists in a series of conscious states, and is never complete as long as the series is flowing on, to suppose the Reality to be Mind would be to make the Absolute finite, and would, in fact, ascribe to the Eternal all the limitations involved in the nature of intelligence and will. We might think of God as a variable, conditioned being, but never as the One Eternal Reality demanded by the primary *data* of consciousness. Intelligence and will involve a denial of the Absolute; they are inconsistent with our necessary conception of the undifferentiated ground of all phenomena.

The ground of the denial that the One Reality is a Creator may be briefly expressed thus: Creation is inconceivable. We have no warrant for believing what our mental constitution does not afford us the faculty for thinking. All our knowledge is phenomenal, and therefore we are not furnished with the elements which must enter into

a conception which necessarily relates to what antedates phenomena. Moreover, the doctrine of a Creative God is beset with the difficulty of requiring us to conceive the termination of absolute existence—the passing of the Absolute Being into Relative Being.

Now let us consider the validity of the position taken with respect to the One Reality not being Mind. Every student of Spencer knows with what skill he makes his various lines of reasoning converge on the existence of the Inscrutable Reality —devoid of what is understood by intelligence and will. But only those who have mastered his system of Psychology know how the whole of his arguments depend on the view, which he there seeks to establish, of the nature of mind, or, as he is pleased to call it, for the sake of consistency, the "Composition of Mind." And it ought never to be forgotten by apologists that the key to the solution of the great problem of the Divine existence is psychological. What, then, does Spencer mean by mind? This may be answered negatively and positively. Negatively, there is no such thing as mind considered as a reality, an entity, a seat of power, a real, permanent, spiritual being, subsisting as a real nature expressed by its own appropriate qualities and attributes. Posi-

tively, mind is only a name given by us to denote the sum of a succession of vivid and faint states which become variously differentiated and integrated as the organism of the brain becomes more elaborated. This, at first, might seem to be a revival of the *flux* of Heraclitus and the ontological scepticism of Hume. But no! Mr Spencer claims the existence of a Reality, a Power which accounts for the existence of this series, only it is not the finite reality commonly regarded as the seat and base of the mental facts, but the One Eternal Reality, the Inscrutable Power, which stands equally related to the mental and the material phenomena. Mind, then, exists only as a fleeting series of differentiated "feelings," which have no other origin or base than that which is also the base of the varied changes of the material world. Feelings and motions alike are as bubbles rising out of the Inscrutable, and ceasing to be as soon as they come forth, giving place to an endless succession of the same transitory appearances. Now, of course, if this be a true account of mind, the One Reality cannot be mind. A child might see that a set of lungs and a tobacco pipe cannot be bubbles. It would carry me far into detail were I to argue out this question of the nature, or, as Spencer is pleased to call it, "Composition of

Mind." But I shall content myself with saying that until he has established his theory of mind on an impregnable basis, the whole of his argument against the attribution of mind to God is worthless. I may here add that it is beyond human ingenuity to show how, on the hypothesis of all we know being fleeting states of consciousness, it is possible to arrive at the knowledge of a Reality at all, be it scrutable or inscrutable. There is really no escape from Hume's untenable position, which Spencer seems to regard with horror, unless you accept the reverse doctrine that "mind" is a permanent being, and if so, the Eternal Reality may certainly be Eternal Mind. The succession of states of consciousness, in that case, is quite compatible with essential unchangeableness in the One Reality. The Living God is everlasting, though, in time, He is conscious of all the acts of intelligence and volition. Some persons are perhaps surprised at the zeal with which Mr. Spencer elaborates his theory of mind in relation to his theory of the One Reality which is not mind, but a close acquaintance with his philosophy as a whole will dissipate the wonder. It is made an essential part of his theory of Evolution, according to which the twofold "manifestations," mental and material, are but two faces, two everlasting ex-

pressions, in an ordered way, of the One Inscrutable Power. But the clue to the zeal is doubtless to be found in the clear perception which he has that, when once you concede that what we call mind in man is a reality capable of continued existence in conscious modes, you have given a rational basis for the Biblical representations of God as an Eternal Reality, whose essential nature is Mind; and if I might offer a suggestion to our army of apologists, I would say, by all means make the psychological position your stronghold.

The importance which Mr. Spencer attaches to the question of mind, as a permanent reality, is seen in the vigorous logic by which he endeavours to show that we cannot possibly know any such thing.[1] We know only conscious states. To say that we know anything which is not a conscious state is practically nonsense. I have not space here to point out the fallacy of this reasoning as applied to mind, but just call attention to the fact that the reasoning itself cuts at the root of the entire fabric of knowledge which, in elaborating his theory of Evolution, he has reared. For if his argument is true against the permanent reality of mind, as distinguished from a series of fleeting conscious states, it is *a fortiori* true against his

[1] "Psychology," vol. i. pp. 145–162.

own belief in the existence of an Eternal Inscrutable Reality, which is neither a set of states nor a set of material qualities, but the common base or ground of them all. If my states of consciousness cannot certify me of a root or base which I call a permanent finite reality in which they inhere, how can they possibly certify me of a reality which is in relation to them, and, also, to what is not one of my conscious states? The pressure of this question on Mr. Spencer's logical conscience seems to be very heavy, for in his "First Principles" he even speaks of that "vague consciousness of Absolute Being" which no mental effort can suppress. It is obvious that this does not improve matters, for how is it possible to say that, in a bare series of states, there is a "vague consciousness" of Absolute Being—of that which, by hypothesis, is the base and source of all mental states, and, indeed, of all phenomena—and yet to say that we cannot believe in a something, a real finite being, as the base of our mental states, because, forsooth, knowledge consists in mental states? If knowledge cannot transcend these states so that we may know of the existence of a mind which is something more than—*i.e.*, a ground of the—bare states, how can it transcend them so as to give us the knowledge of an infinite inscrutable ground

of them? It seems to me that the condition of knowledge laid down to prevent belief in mind as a permanent reality, expressing itself in states or modes, equally prevents belief in any permanent Reality; and if the existence of states of consciousness is compatible with belief in an Inscrutable Absolute Being, it follows that it is compatible with belief in mind as a permanent reality; for the principle involved is the same in both cases. The result is, that inasmuch as the objection to the Biblical representation of God proceeds on the supposition that mind in man is, and can only be, a bare series of states, the objection falls to the ground when it is thus shown that the very system that seeks to prove it to be such is, thereby, rendered impossible; while, on the other hand, the evidence afforded by the system of the existence of an Absolute Being as the base of phenomena is also available for the proof of the existence of mind as a permanent base of conscious states. There is, then, philosophic truth in the Biblical account of the One Reality as Mind.

Apart from the psychological question, there is, also, an element from the transcendental philosophy of Germany which seems to render the Biblical representation of God displeasing to the extreme Evolutionist. The idea is, that the Absolute Being

would cease to be Absolute were we to conceive It or Him as Intelligence and Will, since the acts involved in these are inconsistent with the idea of Absoluteness. Thought and will imply a discriminated, a conditioned, mode of being. Now it might be enough to adduce an antinomy, and show that unless the Absolute can think and act it is not Absolute, but under limitations. But leaving bare logic, let me take the case of the Absolute Being, which, according to Mr. Spencer, is the ground of all phenomena. The incessant phenomena of matter and mind are said to be "manifestations" of the Absolute Being or Inscrutable Reality. These "manifestations" are the outcome of power; they imply that the Absolute acts in a certain way; they are definite modes along which the Power moves. Such being the case, there is as real a destruction of the Absolute as in the supposed case of the Biblical representation of God. The action of God is as consistent with the existence of the Absolute as is the action of the Inscrutable Power with the existence of Mr. Spencer's Absolute Being.

Space forbids my entering further into the argument so far as relates to God being Mind. A word or two must be said on the Biblical representation of God as CREATOR.

As to creation being conceivable, I think people familiar with the controversy know pretty well how this word "conceivable" has been discussed. In the sense of framing an image—*Vorstellung*—no one supposes creation is conceivable. Perhaps those who object to creation in this sense will tell us whether they can so conceive of Absolute Being. We know what must be their reply; and yet they believe most assuredly in the fact that there was and is an Absolute Being. Doubtless there have been absurd representations of creation, among which I cannot but include that which embraces the expression "*out of nothing;*" at the same time it is not possible to apply the principle of causality rigorously to the finite, phenomenal forms, which make up the present universe, without being brought intellectually face to face with the ultimate fact that they owe their existence to a First Cause, *i.e.*, that they, as phenomena, were originated.

It is, then, a pure question of thought, and not of representation or conception. But passing by that, I would take the alternative case proposed by Mr. Spencer. He thinks it an improvement on the Biblical account to speak of the phenomena which make up the world as being "manifestations" of the One Reality. Now let us apply his

own criterion, and ask whether he can conceive an Inscrutable Reality causing something to arise which is not the Reality itself, *i.e.*, "manifestation"? Can he form an image of the act? Moreover, if there be any validity in the distinction between "Reality" and "Manifestation," there is never a time when the Reality is not, but there is a time when the "Manifestation" is not; so that the "Manifestation," *i.e.*, something which is not the Reality, comes into existence. It may be temporary existence, but still it is new existence, and existence of that which is not Reality. That which explains the fact is the wondrous power of the Inscrutable Reality. Now, just change the term and say, instead of "manifestation," "created thing," and you have essentially the doctrine of creation. For according to the Bible the world is a manifestation of the power of the Eternal God.[1] Things were made by the WORD of God. They are the expression of His Being. My thoughts are the manifestation of my mind-power: they are creations: they may presuppose, according to a certain psychology, sensations as their crude form, but as *thoughts* they are new things—they are the outcome of an Invisible Reality which, as such, is distinguishable from themselves. And

[1] Rom. i. 19, 20.

thus, even out of our own experience, we may get an analogy to throw some light on the most remote and inaccessible of all problems—the creation of the world by God. No one who considers what is implied in the temporal relation of phenomena, or "manifestations," to the One Reality, can have much to say in way of objection to the Scripture doctrine of creation by God.

In conclusion,[1] then, I say that in so far as there is ascertained truth in the causal element of Evolution, it is a justification of the root idea in the Biblical representations of God, and in so far as the causal element is said to be at variance with the Biblical representation, the account given of it is dependent on a theory of Mind which will not bear examination, while, on the other hand, the Biblical account harmonises with the most rational psychology.

[1] It could also be shown that the mystery of the "Inscrutable" affords a natural basis for the mystery of the revealed doctrine of the Trinity.

X.

EVOLUTION AND MAN'S FACULTY OF KNOWLEDGE.

By JOSEPH JOHN MURPHY, Esq.

I CANNOT agree with the sentence with which Professor Momerie has begun his able and eloquent essay ("Evolution and Design") in this series: —"The theory of Evolution leaves one half of the universe completely unaccounted for, namely, the mental half." It is quite true that Evolution does not account for the existence of mind; but neither does it account for the existence of anything whatever. To use a distinction which must be as old as logical philosophy, and which has been popularised by that clear but not very profound thinker, Charles Kingsley, the theory of Evolution teaches nothing about the *why* of things, but only about the *how*. It teaches that things have come to be what they are, not by a single creative act, but by a gradual process, proceeding from indefiniteness to definiteness, and from simplicity to complexity.

But this is only a summary of results, not a statement of their causes. It requires to be itself accounted for, by referring it to more elementary laws. Nevertheless, the law of Evolution is generally true, and mind is no exception to it. Sensation is the germ out of which mind has been evolved.

But how has sensation itself been evolved? This is a fundamental mystery, on which no observation or experiment or reasoning can conceivably throw any light. Professor Momerie quotes Tyndall as saying that the connection between thought and molecular action in the brain is "unthinkable," or, in commoner English, unintelligible; not only unknown, but impossible to be known. This is quite true; but if it is asserted of thought or mind only, it is misleading. The ultimate mystery is not the perfected evolution of mind, with its self-conscious thought and will—the ultimate mystery is the first origin of sensation. Given the fact that living tissue becomes sentient, the development of the sentient or nervous tissue into a brain, and of sensation into thought, are mysterious only as all vital development is mysterious; but to quote Tyndall's passage on this subject, with the change of a few words which I mark in italics:—"The passage from the

physics of the *nerves* to the corresponding facts of *sensation* is unthinkable. Granted that a definite *sensation* and a definite molecular action in the *nerves* occur simultaneously, we do not possess the intellectual organ, nor apparently the rudiments of such an organ, which would enable us to pass, by a process of reasoning, from the one to the other. They appear together, but we do not know why."

We must here turn aside from the natural course of the argument, to meet an objection which will be felt by many. If Mind is a development of sensation, and if Thought depends for its existence on currents in the nerves of the brain, what becomes of the distinctness of the mind, or soul, from the body? and if it is not distinct, how can it be immortal?

I reply, that if the belief in immortality depended on any metaphysical or quasi-physical theory of the distinctness of the soul, it would have to be abandoned. But this is not the case. The truth, as I believe it to be, which Christ and His Apostles have taught, is not that the soul is naturally immortal, but that immortality it to be conferred upon it—that *God will raise the dead.*[1] Science can do nothing to refute this, and not

[1] See John v. 24, 29; and Acts xxvi. 8.

much to confirm it; but the analogies of Nature, so far as the case admits of any, are rather in its favour. Evolutionists often say that no change in Nature is abrupt, and that whatever comes into being is only a development from something which existed before. But though this is generally true, it appears to present one exception of vast importance and significance, namely, the origin of organic life. Though the origin of sensation is absolutely inscrutable, yet the critical turning-point in the history of creation was not the origin of sensation, but the origin of organic life. All observation and experiment are in favour of the belief that the properties of living beings are not resultants from those of matter, but have been superinduced on matter; and this must have been done by an exertion of the same Creative Power which at the first called matter into being. It is true that Tyndall has so firm a belief in the "continuity of Nature" that he discerns in matter "the promise and potency of all terrestrial life," including the mental and spiritual life of Man; but this he does admittedly without evidence, and only in obedience to an imaginary necessity of the intellect. It seems to me that Professor Clifford, in maintaining that "mind-stuff," or the material out of which mind is evolved, exists in every separate atom of matter,

has only pushed Tyndall's view to its legitimate and necessary *reductio ad absurdum*.

We maintain that the same Creative Power which at the first called matter into being, and afterwards conferred life upon it, is able to give life to the dead. But "how are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" To this question we can give only St. Paul's answer, that our knowledge is no measure of the possibilities of creation and the resources of the Creator; and we can only repeat his formula of Evolution, which is true for the entire process of creation—"That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward, that which is spiritual." It is true that by the word which we translate by *natural* St. Paul meant only belonging to the natural life; he was not thinking of unvitalised matter; but it is doing no violence to his teaching if we read into it a meaning kindred with his own, but wider; and if we complete his meaning by saying that mere matter was first; then natural or organic life, attaining its highest development in the brain of man; and finally spiritual and immortal life—the *life and immortality* which has been *brought to light* by Christ.[1] The spiritual world appears to be related to the visible, and spiritual life to

[1] 2 Tim. i. 10.

organic and merely mental life, very much as organic and mental life to the agencies of the inorganic world.

I have so far been arguing only that the spiritual faith which Christianity demands is in no way endangered by the doctrine of Evolution. I have now to show how, in my view, the evolutionary conception of mind is a better and safer basis for such a faith than the old metaphysical conceptions can be.

By the metaphysical conception of Mind I mean the doctrine that mind and matter are absolutely distinct and unlike, though in our present state of being they are united and act on each other. To this conception belongs the belief in the natural immortality of the soul—the belief that the mind, or soul, does not die with the body, but is liberated by its death.

This conception of the nature of Mind was, of course, always confronted with the difficulty of understanding how the mind and the body, being supposed to belong to totally distinct and unlike orders of being, could act on each other at all. This, however, was accepted as a fact, impossible to deny, but altogether mysterious; and, of course, it is true that the mysteriousness of a fact is no reason for denying it. There is a mystery at the ground of all being whatever.

But there are other questions which the metaphysical theory of Mind, so far from solving, is scarcely able to state. What is the mental nature of animals, and how is it related to their bodily life? What is the relation of mind to bodily sensation? And how is mind related to the evolution of the body? For though the evolution of species is a modern discovery, the evolution of the individual has been always known.[1] This last question has been answered in a strangely arbitrary way by some theologians, who have maintained that the soul of every man who is born into the world owes its existence to a separate act of Creative Power; —a theory which can be neither proved nor disproved, but is contrary to all the analogies of nature. It is not possible that such questions should be so answered as to clear away all the mystery which surrounds them; but this is true of the most fundamental questions in every branch of science; and the evolutionary theory of Mind, if it cannot solve such questions, is at least able to state them accurately, to place them in their relation to each other, and to show where the mystery lies. It is obviously impossible to pursue this subject into its details within the limits of an essay like the present, but my general drift is indicated

[1] See Ps. cxxxix. 15, 16; and Eccles. xi. 5.

by the remark already made, that the initial and fundamental mystery is the fact of organic tissue becoming sentient; and this mystery is in no degree diminished by the fact that the beginning of sensation appears to be gradual, so that there is no sharp separation between sentient and insentient life, like that between life and the forces of inorganic matter.

The chief problem of philosophy—of the *scientia scientiarum*, as distinguished from particular sciences—is the nature, conditions, and limits of knowledge. At an early period the doctrine that knowledge comes through the perceptions was formulised in the well-known saying, "There is nothing in the intellect but what was previously in the sense." But this, even if true, was obviously an incomplete statement; and Leibnitz modified it thus—"There is nothing in the intellect but what was previously in the sense, except the intellect itself." This addition to the old axiom is so self-evident that it may appear scarcely worth making; but how much does it include? It raises the entire question of the mutual relation of the two factors of our knowledge, namely, the impressions which come through the organs of sense, and the intellect, on which the impressions are made. This is a vast subject, and it is perhaps not too

much to say that all philosophical work since the time of Leibnitz has been occupied in threshing it out. The chief purpose of the present essay is to show that the doctrine of Evolution throws upon it a valuable and most satisfactory light.

The philosophy of Kant, which its author rightly named the Critical Philosophy, is in the first place occupied with this problem; and its result is briefly this:—The matter, or material, of knowledge is contributed by the senses, and the form by the mind itself. There are forms of thought (or rather of intuition), especially time, space, and causation (or the relation of cause and effect), which belong to the structure of the mind, and constitute moulds, as it were, wherein the material furnished by sensation is cast into form;—or, to use a different and more instructive illustration, the forms of thought are related to the impressions of sense, somewhat as the formative agency which builds up the organism is related to the materials which come into it in its food.

The distinctness of these forms of thought, at least those of space and time, from mere impressions of sense, is shown by the fact that we perceive them to be universal and necessary. It is true that all objects are presented in space, and all events occur in time; but if we imagine all

objects to be absent, space will still remain; and if we imagine all events to be absent, time will still remain.

It is a mere statement of fact to say that these are forms of thought; but the question remains for solution, What is their relation to the reality of things external to the mind? Kant appears to have concluded that they are forms of thought and nothing more; that their existence and meaning as forms of thought can no more be accounted for than the properties of matter; and that although our mental constitution compels us to perceive and to think of things and events according to the forms of space, time, and causation, yet these have not, or at least may not have, any reality external to our own minds. It is difficult to see how any other conclusion is logically possible, consistently with the metaphysical conception of Mind which was received in Kant's time, according to which, although the mind comes into contact with the external world in sensation, yet in thought it is shut in and isolated. And from this the passage is easy and obvious to a denial that absolute truth —truth which is true independently of any faculties of ours—is attainable by us, and a doubt whether it has any existence. Thus with Kant the conclusions of the speculative reason led to

speculative scepticism. Although he endeavoured to escape from the absolute scepticism of the pure, or speculative, reason by means of what he called the practical reason—that is to say, the sense of Duty as distinguished from the sense of Truth —this part of his philosophy is not generally thought to be successful; and it certainly appears extremely improbable that if absolute, supersensual, and Divine truth is opened to man through the sense of duty, it should be made known in no other way. It is certainly much more likely that when once our eyes are opened to the light of Heaven, everything will be seen to shine with it.

But to return to the conclusions of Kant's speculative reason. His conclusion that absolute truth is absolutely unattainable is what is now called Agnosticism; and, so far as I am aware, the agnostics of our time have made no advance on this part of his philosophy.

It is obvious that our views of the nature and limits of knowledge must be much influenced by our views of the nature of the Mind and the origin of our intuitions. Although the view of the nature of the Mind which Kant adopted from his contemporaries, according to which the Mind, or Soul, is distinct from the body, and isolated from the external world in thought though communicating

with it in sensation, was the orthodox view of the eighteenth century both in philosophy and in religion, and may perhaps be called the orthodox view still, yet it was never altogether uncontested; there were always some who maintained that Mind has no distinct existence, and that thought is only a function of the brain. According to their view, the doctrine that Mind has a distinct existence is only an instance of that error which consists in mistaking abstractions for realities, and fancying that where there is a name there must be a corresponding reality. The necessities of language demand distinct names for body and mind, and generally for properties, functions, and actions belonging to the physical and the mental orders; and before thought has learned to correct its own errors this leads to the inference that these distinct names are the names of distinct realities. This view, denying the separate existence of Mind, has till our time been regarded as materialistic in philosophy and as heretical in religion; but our philosophy is beginning to see that it is true, and our theology to see that the question has no direct theological importance. In connection with this view of the nature of Mind, the theory which was formulised by Kant, of forms of thought belonging to the structure of the Mind itself, has been, not

set aside, but so transformed as completely to change its significance.

Although Locke assented to the prevalent theory of the distinct existence of Mind, he maintained that what are now called forms of thought, and among them time, space, and causation, are the results of experience coming through the organs of sense. This was never quite a satisfactory explanation;—even if the process of acquiring these conceptions by experience were a possible one, it appeared impossible that every one could have acquired them so easily and so unconsciously that the process of their acquisition has left no trace in the memory; and Kant afterwards maintained the opposite doctrine that they belong to the structure of the Mind itself, and are antecedent to all experience. It is merely a generalised statement of fact to say that time, space, and causation are forms of thought; the question is how they have become so. Kant regarded the fact as an ultimate one, not to be accounted for. This was natural enough, when the idea of Evolution as applied to Mind was unknown, and all the properties of Mind, as well as the characteristics of every species of living being, were directly referred to Creative Wisdom and Will. But now that the doctrine of Evolution is applied to all life, sentient

as well as insentient, mental as well as organic, Locke's theory of these conceptions being derived from experience has been revived, chiefly by Herbert Spencer, but in a greatly improved form. Spencer's theory is that they are results of experience which have become forms of thought,—results of the inherited experience of the race, which have become forms of thought for the individual.

This theory professes to combine all that is true in the theories of both Locke and Kant. It professes to be an explanation where Kant only offered a generalised statement, and to be a sufficient explanation where Locke offered a totally inadequate one. I do not think it altogether sufficient, but it is obviously a great improvement on both of the theories which it professes to complete and combine. Time, space, and causation, or force, are elements of all the experience of all conscious organisms; and though experience is not consciously inherited, yet its results are inherited and pass into character; so that when organisms in the course of their evolution become in any degree intelligent, these conceptions enter into their intelligence and become part of it.

Before going on to state where I think this theory needs modification, or rather completion, I will remark that in adhering to Kant's agnosticism,

and denying the external objective reality of these conceptions, Herbert Spencer and others who think with him, appear inconsistent with their own principles. Being unable to get beyond the truth that time, space, and causation are forms of thought, and regarding the mind as something distinct from the world of matter and altogether unlike it, Kant was consistent with himself in denying that they are realities of the external world. But Herbert Spencer believes that the mind is a part, and an evolved product, of the world which surrounds it; and that these forms of thought are the result of the action of the surrounding world upon the Mind in experience. Now surely "neither the individual nor the race could have the experience wherein these ideas have originated, if the realities represented by these ideas had not existed before our experience of them began. Time, space, and causation are not the result but the cause of our experience of them. Our minds have not created, but have discovered them."

"If this is true, we have escaped from the cloud-land of metaphysics by coming out at the farther side into common sense and inductive science; and we stand again, as we stood in our unmetaphysical childhood, on the firm familiar earth and in the 'light of common day,' trusting with not only an

instinctive but a rational trust, that our knowledge, having grown from experience, truly interprets experience;—that our forms of thought, being produced by the constant action of the external world on our bodily and mental organisation through countless generations, really represent the realities of the external world."

Our conclusion as to whether Herbert Spencer's theory on this subject is complete and satisfactory will probably depend on our opinion respecting the nature and origin of intelligence. He regards it as a result of experience, acting within consciousness, through the agency of mental habit and the association of ideas, and accumulated and strengthened, as all mental and bodily powers are, by hereditary transmission. I believe, on the contrary, that intelligence is as much an ultimate fact as consciousness, and not resolvable into anything but itself. I cannot discuss this question in the present essay,[1] but will mention one property of our idea of time which it appears impossible for mere experience to have produced. "We naturally believe that time is alike without end and without beginning. Now the pure and simple experience theory does not account for this. It accounts for the

[1] I have treated this question very fully in my work on "Habit and Intelligence."

belief that time is without end, by the fact that we have never had experience of any portion of time without another portion of time coming after it. But this will not apply to our belief that time is without beginning; for the first time that any one's consciousness was awakened, he had at that moment experience of a position of time without having experience of any other position of time coming before it; so that, for anything that mere experience can witness to, there is nothing inconceivable in a beginning of time. This shows that although we have obtained our knowledge of time by direct cognition, and it has become a form of our thought by the accumulation of inherited experience, yet there is something in the conception which cannot be thus accounted for, and which can be referred only to that intelligence which is not a result of experience." [1]

But I thoroughly agree with Herbert Spencer in believing that thought derives its laws from that universe of things whereof the mind is a part; and from this I further infer that our spontaneous conceptions agree with the reality of things, and that our knowledge has a rational basis. This escape

[1] This passage, and the former ones in quotation marks, are taken, with the change of a few words, from my "Habit and Intelligence," second edition, pp. 459, 460.

from scepticism and agnosticism seems perfectly satisfactory; so that the philosophy of Evolution, though it is despised as being materialistic, affords a basis for belief; while those idealistic systems whereof Kant's is the type, which are constructed out of the mind itself, notwithstanding their vast pretensions to spirituality, lead by a direct and logical path to absolute theoretical scepticism.

And if the intuitions of our intelligence in relation to the external and visible world are true, we may consistently trust the intuitions of our moral and spiritual intelligence, which testify to the absolute difference between moral good and evil, and to the imperative character of the moral sense; and which teach us to hope, even without or against all obvious and common evidence, that there is Goodness at the foundation of the universe, and that this Goodness may reveal itself. The moral instincts alone are what make the reception of a revelation possible. The fundamental axiom of all theology is that *God cannot lie;*[1] we could not receive a revelation as from God if we had not that belief independently of all revelation. The origin of these moral and spiritual instincts to which a moral and spiritual revelation can be made, is not identical, but is parallel with the

[1] Titus i. 2.

origin of such intuitions as those of time, space, and causation. We have true intuitions respecting the external and visible universe which exists in space and time, because we are a part of that universe;—time, space, and causation are forms of our thought because they are facts of that universe of which we are part; and, similarly, the moral and spiritual truths which we instinctively recognise enter into the constitution of our souls because we are intelligent creatures of God, and members of the moral and spiritual universe.

> "War nicht das Auge sonnenhaft,
> Wie könnten wir das Licht erblicken?"

Were there not light in the nature of the eye, how could we see the light?

I do not expect the speculation here advanced to meet with general assent; on the contrary, I expect to displease orthodox men with my premises, and agnostics with my conclusions. Nevertheless, even those who do not agree with my reasonings will probably agree that every consistent and not obviously absurd theory on this class of subjects is worth stating; and it may be that in a generation or two, when Evolution is as generally accepted as the motion of the earth, some one, in turning over the pages of the present volume,

will remark that I have taken great trouble in expounding what is perfectly self-evident and commonplace.

If I am called a materialist, I care neither to admit nor to deny the name. I agree with Herbert Spencer that Materialism and Spiritualism are not two systems of which each denies the truth of the other, but two opposite sides of the same truth.[1] If I have to state my creed on this subject, I will do so in the words of Oersted, the discoverer of electro-magnetism: "I am at once a materialist and a spiritualist." And I will add, that I am a Natural Realist on a basis of Evolutionism.

[1] I have treated of this subject in my "Scientific Bases of Faith," chapters i. and ii.

XI.

EVOLUTION: HEAVEN AND HELL.

By the Rev. Sir GEORGE W. COX, M.A.

I HAVE undertaken to say a few words on Evolution in reference to Heaven and Hell, that is, to the (supposed) state of the good and the bad in future conditions of life, which are related to the life lived by them here. Whatever be meant by Evolution generally, and the Evolution of religious belief in particular, no one probably will deny that the highest, or, at all events, the furthest, stage thus far reached in this Evolution is represented by the belief avowed by St. Paul in the final conquest and extinction of all evil. Without asserting or implying that his belief is right or in accordance with fact, we cannot fail to notice his conviction that the only death which man, as such, can die is the death of sin; and that from this death he can be delivered only by dying the death to sin; that absolutely and perfectly none have died this death to sin except Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son; that,

so long as the principle of selfishness or self-will or disobedience, that is, of sin, clings to them, men can at best be regarded only as partakers of the death of Christ; that Christ, however, must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet, that is, until He has conquered moral and spiritual resistance in every form; that the last enemy to be destroyed is death, the very principle of disobedience or self-will, that is, of sin; and that, this sin or death being clean destroyed, or extinguished in all who had been tainted by it, He will give back the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all.

We may, if we please, speak of this belief as a theory; but in point of fact it is the highest stage reached as yet by any human mind on the great subject of the destiny of man. It by no means marks the end in the process of Evolution, for, if it be the highest point thus far reached by human thought, it must in the end be reached by all human minds; and as yet St. Paul stands practically by himself, in a minority to all appearance hopelessly small. We have, then, his faith at the one end, and at the other the lowest belief, whatever that may be, which has dawned on the mind of the savage. For on this subject we may, rather we must, say at once that we can only go from the

lowest to the highest, and that of this lowest and highest we must ourselves be the judges. We are not dealing with geological strata or with the modifications of species. We are dealing avowedly with thoughts about heaven and hell; and if we object to dealing with thoughts, on the ground that thoughts are not phenomena, we must leave the whole subject alone. Were we to go on and speak of the development of faith or belief on this subject as part of the education of the world, a scientific objection might more fairly be raised to our words. Education, in the sense which ninety-nine out of every hundred attach to the term, implies an educator, implies a presiding will, implies a definite aim. This for the present we must put out of sight; and we may be content to say that man is an animal giving utterance to certain notions or fancies on the subject of a life which he thinks that he shall live when he has ceased to move visibly here; that these utterances form themselves into systems of religious practice, ritual, and discipline; that these systems can be subjected to scrutiny and comparison; and that, being so subjected, they exhibit an unfolding of thoughts, to which we assign a certain order, and to which we assign it necessarily according to our own judgment. The conviction of St. Paul that all are in

the end to be set free from sin and to live in the Divine righteousness for ever is not to be placed on the same level with the thoughts of those who speak of a bottomless Tartaros as swallowing up ninety-nine hundredths of all rational creatures. No reference to Evolution or to definitions of Evolution is to make us hesitate to place the former immeasurably above the latter; and if we insist on regarding the religious thought of the people of Dahomey on this subject as higher or later in order than the hope of an extinction of evil for all and in all, we put ourselves beyond the bounds of debate not less thoroughly than if we insist on speaking of a straight line as crooked, or a triangle as square.

This caution is not so absurd or superfluous as it may sometimes seem, for under cover of alleged rigorous scientific method, a real tyranny is exercised over us in the search for facts, to which we are in no way called on to submit. It is implied that the history of human beliefs is to be read precisely as we read the story of the rocks, or of that which we call physical life; but granting this, we are still unable to read it at all, unless we take count of a factor which is not present in what is termed, for instance, the Evolution of species. We have to deal with the thoughts of human minds,

and these minds are not phenomena; nor can we read their thoughts except by referring them to a standard within ourselves. Regarding the matter thus, we certainly have before us many series of phenomena which exhibit in their development a striking likeness to those with which other sciences have to deal. In the one and in the other there are ages; and these ages often overlap or are contemporaneous with each other. The age of flint weapons goes on still side by side with that of Minie rifles and Krupp and Armstrong guns.

But although we may for the present set final causes aside, we must take care not to put ourselves under any constraints to which the conditions of scientific method do not strictly bind us. We will look on the evolution of religious thought or belief on the subject of heaven and hell as a process; but when we have described the process, we shall refuse to acknowledge that we have done anything more, and we shall steadily decline to be bound to any conclusions, or rather assumptions, as to the cause of those processes or their purpose. We are in no way required to put upon our necks the yoke of a Lucretian bondage. The Roman poet might, if it pleased him, say that the birth of the tongue was long anterior to language, and that, in short, all the members existed before there was

any employment for them, and that they could not therefore have grown for the purpose of being used. He might deny that the eye was made in order that we might be able to see, and he might assert that the proposition which he denied was a perverse putting of the effect for the cause; but his own method is a not less perverse wandering beyond the limits of his evidence. If he has evidence to show that the eye existed before there was light to exercise it, let it be produced; but this leaves us just where we were with reference to purpose or design, if there be any in it. Only, as a matter of fact, eyes and ears answer a certain purpose *now;* and we may be content to note this fact without further categorical denials for which we have no warrant. When Lucretius spoke thus, he probably had in his mind the phenomena of rudimentary organs, of which some modern philosophers have contrived to make so much. The existence of these organs, according to Haeckel, is the strongest possible argument "against the customary teleology, or doctrine of design," and indeed shows that "the 'moral ordering of the world' is evidently a beautiful poem which is proved to be false by actual facts." The point, in the judgment of this self-satisfied teacher, admits of no debate. "None but the idealist scholar who closes his eyes to the

real truth, or the priest who tries to keep his spiritual flock in ecclesiastical leading-strings, can any longer tell the fable of the moral ordering of the world. It exists neither in Nature nor in human life, neither in natural history nor the history of civilisation. The terrible and ceaseless struggle for existence gives the real impulse to the blind course of the world. A moral ordering and a purposive plan of the world can only be visible if the prevalence of an immoral rule of the strongest and undesigned organisation is entirely ignored."

Such language as this is eminently unscientific. It is not warranted by the facts before the writer. He may speak, perhaps, of an immoral or unmoral order as having been prevalent once everywhere; but to say that all things now exhibit the unrestrained working of an immoral order is not less unscientific than if, when a hundred facts are set before us, we deliberately put aside fifty or forty before we begin the work of comparison from which alone our conclusions can be drawn. The fact is that the term "Evolution" is simply descriptive of a process, and to treat the description of a process as an explanation of the nature of a thing is utterly monstrous. The assertion of St. Paul may not be calculated very nicely to satisfy the requirements of scientific method, but it is vastly more scientific

than the arbitrary dicta of Haeckel. The unmoral order of which the latter speaks is with St. Paul the vanity to which the creature has been *unwillingly* subjected by its Maker, who has done so in the hope, that is, with the purpose, of bringing all to the glorious liberty of the children of God. St. Paul here distinctly recognises the two orders of things, and his words are thus fully in accordance with present facts. Not so the phrases of Haeckel. So far as anything beyond the mere changes of phenomena is concerned, the phrase Evolution leaves us just where we were before we began. Dr. Matheson, in his paper on "Evolution in relation to Miracle" (at the beginning of this volume), quotes the celebrated or notorious definition of Mr. Herbert Spencer, who tells us that "Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion, during which the matter passes from an indefinite incoherent homogeneity to a definite coherent heterogeneity, and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation." What do we learn from these fine phrases? Not a jot more than we learn from the same language when it is translated into the homely English of our forefathers, who, if they had ever thought of saying anything of the sort, would have said, "Unrolling is a making-whole of

stuff, and with-gliding scattering of going, during which the stuff goes from an unmarked not-sticking-together one-kind-ness to a marked sticking-together other-kind-ness, and during which the going that is kept undergoes a side-by-side reshaping." Both sets of words describe a process. Neither does anything more; and we therefore merely describe a process, or it may be many processes, when we trace the workings of the human mind on the subject of heaven and hell.

If thoughts on these subjects, and practices resulting from these thoughts, are found everywhere (we are not concerned with affirming even this fact), we need not on this account commit ourselves to any opinions as to the universality of religion. The belief that man lives on after his body is said to have died may be a belief of religion, or a religious belief; or it may not. We may put the word "religion" aside for the present altogether. But, although it may not seem to be so, it is mere tautology to say that thoughts about heaven and hell, that is, about conditions not realised in this life, could not possibly come into the minds of men if they believed that a man died altogether when his body dies. In other words, the idea of heaven and hell is inseparably connected with and implies that of immortality—of immortality not in the sense of

endless existence, but only of an existence independent of the physical death here. It is also obvious that this belief, or this notion of continued existence, must in the order of time and of thought precede those speculations on the conditions of that state which shape themselves gradually into pictures of heaven and hell. As to this sense of continued life, and the meaning or purpose of it (if any), we may think as we please. We may compare the earliest phases of it with the rudimentary organs which Haeckel has found so useful, and infer with him that there is no Divine education of man; or we may say that man is so constituted that he must come to this belief; or we may say that it is part of a work which is tending still to a goal in the unseen future. Of these three conclusions the first is wholly unscientific; the second may be taken as fairly in accordance with facts thus far ascertained; the third expresses a belief of which it may be said with truth that it is not contradicted by any theory of Evolution.

An examination of the lowest forms of thought on the subject will show us that they took shape from the phenomena both of sleep and of physical death. The latter seemed to be the more permanent condition, and this was pretty nearly all the difference. In either case there was a change of

action. The frame which had been in motion was now motionless; the voice to which they had listened was now silent. Such evidence as we have at our command seems to show that it never entered into the heads of primitive men to suppose that the change was the result of anything being lost. Something, however, had gone away—for a few hours, in sleep; permanently, it might be, in death—and this something was the spirit or the soul of the man, which might leave his body under both conditions. At once, then, a way was opened for a thousand speculations which worked one within the other, until they grew up into elaborate systems of savage philosophy, all professing to account for facts which they supposed that they had seen. The many and intricate developments so brought about are well traced by Mr. Tylor in his chapters on Animism in his volumes on Primitive Culture. In dreams the man finds himself wandering in distant lands, or sees the forms of those who had died long ago. On waking he can neither see them nor touch them; but he feels sure that he has seen and touched them nevertheless. They must, therefore, be of extreme tenuity, faint and filmy images of the more full life which energises in those who still walk upon the earth. Hence the doctrine of ghosts,

spirits, or wraiths. But though so thin, the soul still occupies space. "The Chinese," Mr. Tylor tells us, "make a hole in the roof to let the soul out at death;" and Meg Merrilies, in Walter Scott's "Guy Mannering," asks immediately before her death to have the window opened. But the idea of continued life leads speedily, perhaps immediately, to the idea of continued occupations with all the old passions and appetites. Things which were pleasant, or useful, or necessary here, will be pleasant, useful, and necessary there; and thus we reach the horrible system of funeral human sacrifices for the service of the dead. "When a man of rank dies and his soul departs to its own place, wherever and whatever that place may be, it is a rational inference of early philosophy that the souls of attendants, slaves, and wives, put to death at his funeral will make the same journey and continue their service in the next life; and the argument is frequently stretched further, to include the souls of new victims sacrificed in order that they may enter upon the same ghostly servitude."[1] This idea may, as Mr Tylor remarks, lead easily to monstrous systems of massacre; but it is, obviously, an idea which refuses to confine the notion of continued life to men only.

[1] Tylor, "Primitive Culture," i., 413.

The warrior's horse or dog will bear him company to the spirit land, and must be slain accordingly; but Mr Tylor, like Haeckel, goes beyond the evidence of facts before him, when he draws the inference that the continuance of the life of brute animals has become a topic of that mild talk in which speculators indulge "with a lurking consciousness of its being after all a piece of sentimental nonsense."[1]

We have here, with a definiteness which tends to become ghastly, the belief in existence continued after what is called the death of the body; but thus far we have nothing approaching to a hell, and only the faintest possible adumbration of a heaven. The slaying of wives or attendants sprang, partly, from a notion that helpers were needed to make the future life endurable; and the notion soon followed that it might also be made comfortable. The king, the warrior, the master of the house, might enjoy himself there as he had done here, and he would, of course, prefer to do so in his old ways. The American Indian thus came to picture to himself the happy hunting grounds where his forefathers still chased the phantoms of elks and bears. But in all this we cannot trace a sign of a moral or a religious idea. The man

[1] Tylor, "Primitive Culture," i., p. 425.

who is rich or powerful and therefore, it may be, happy in the unseen world, is so because he was rich or powerful here, but not in the least because he had abstained from one set of actions or indulged in another. We are not here tracing the thousand different forms which the idea of continued life may assume. Savage tribes will speak of the spirit of the dreamer leaving his mouth in the form of a weasel or a mouse, and returning to it again before he wakes. It was as easy to suppose that the man after death lived on in the form of a brute animal as in human shape; and perhaps the earliest idea connecting the conditions of life hereafter with the character of the life here is found in some of these notions of transformation. "In Mexico the Tlascalans," Mr. Tylor tells us, "thought that after death the souls of nobles would animate beautiful singing birds, while plebeians passed into weasels and beetles and suchlike vile creatures. In Brazil . . . the Içannas say that the souls of the brave will become beautiful birds feeding on pleasant fruits, but cowards will be turned into reptiles."[1] In whatever light we may regard it, the distinction between bravery and cowardice is a moral distinction; and the pleasantness or discomfort hereafter being thus made dependent on a certain course of

[1] "Primitive Culture," ii., 6.

conduct here brings us at once within the region of moral judgments. How long this process of development may have been, is for us not a point of material consideration; but it has been already worked up into a system when we find the Aryans established as conquerors in India. "The rules," in Mr. Tylor's words, "are set forth in the book of Manu how souls endowed with the quality of goodness acquire Divine nature, while souls governed by passions take up the human state, and souls sunk in darkness are degraded to brutes. . . . Obscure as the relation mostly is between the crime and its punishment in a new life, there may be discovered through the code of penal transmigration an attempt at appropriateness of penalty and an intention to punish the sinner wherein he sinned." Thus "the stealer of food shall be dyspeptic, the scandalmonger shall have foul breath, the horse stealer shall go lame."[1] The same persuasive arguments have been urged by distinguished preachers of the Church of England even in our own day.

Without going further we see that we have reached a stage in which human thought looks on the conditions of continued life as affected by the life here. In other words, an essential distinction

[1] "Primitive Culture," ii., p. 8.

is asserted between right and wrong; and once started in this course, the human mind would not fail to raise on this foundation a fairly coherent and, it may be, even beneficial system. We, however, are concerned here not with the moral or spiritual merits of systems, but solely with their characteristics and modes of working; and on betaking ourselves to Egypt, we find in times which must at least belong to an early period of modern history (if by ancient times we mean those of which all record has been lost), not only a clear idea of recompense for deeds done in the body, but distinct abodes for the good and the bad, and with this the predominance of an ecclesiastical order or caste which exercised an authority fully equal to that of the priesthood of Latin Christendom. Such an order would not fail to inforce a rigid ceremonial system; and accordingly they taught that the souls of the dead were subjected to a strict scrutiny in the halls of Osiris, and having been examined as to the performance of their duties, were placed in the balance which was to determine their condition thenceforward. If they passed the ordeal satisfactorily, they were taken to a blissful region surrounded by a wall of steel, from whose gate the sun comes forth daily in the Eastern sky. We thus come into contact with a new and a most

important factor in the growth of human thought in reference to the life of the departed. The Vedic and the Hellenic paradise lay in the West; but in either case the abode of the righteous dead was associated with the thought of solar splendour, and, it can scarcely be doubted, was suggested by it. In other words, we have come to a form of belief which has been shaped by mythology, that is, by words and phrases which had reference to the phenomena generally of the whole sensible universe. The imagery of the Egyptian paradise is still sensuous enough, although the catechism of the dead lays stress on many exalted virtues, and demands something like a life of real self-devotion. They whose answers to these questions are shown to be truthful by an impartial judgment on their deeds, may henceforth have all that they can desire, bread made from the finest grain, and beer from the red corn of the Nile. They may recline under the boughs of sycamores, while refreshing streams sing pleasantly in their ears. The cool breezes of the north temper the heat, while the gods themselves admit them to their banquets. They wash their feet in silver basins sculptured by the god Ptah of Memphis, a deity not unlike the Hellenic Hephaistos, and they receive golden harvests from the fields allotted to them in the lands

of Hotep. But they are not bound to remain always even in this happy region. They may range through the whole universe in any forms which they may be pleased to assume. But though we have in Egypt a powerful priesthood, we have nothing like a purgatory. The wicked depart to the wretchedness which they have deserved; and, if the judgment in the Hall of Law is favourable, the dead go forth as gods whom nothing can harm, and become one with Osiris and every other divinity.[1] In this hall the departed are made to give a description of their own lives. "I am not," they are represented as saying, "a doer of fraud and iniquity against men. I am not a doer of that which is crooked in place of that which is right. I do not force a labouring man to do more than his daily task. I do not calumniate a servant to his master. I do not cause hunger. I do not cause weeping. I am not a murderer. I do not give order to murder privily. I am not guilty of fraud against any one. I am not a falsifier of measures in the temples." This chapter of the Egyptian book of the dead is supposed to contain the earliest code now known of private and public morality. They who fail to satisfy it are con-

[1] Renouf, "Religion of Ancient Egypt" (Hibbert Lectures, 1879), p. 183.

demned to an existence the sufferings of which are fully as sensual as are the enjoyments of the blessed in their paradise guarded by the walls of steel.

But if we examine these Egyptian conceptions of the state of the good and the bad after death, we shall find that we have advanced but a very small way towards those more elaborate notions of the unseen world with which the traditional Christian theology has made us familiar. The pictures of both are sensuous; and the descriptions of the miseries undergone by the wicked are as terrific as the joys of the righteous are alluring. But we have as yet none of the sharply-drawn dualism which comes probably from more sources than one. There is no one lord of hell who sets himself in armed antagonism to a righteous and holy God as such, and delights in the multiplication of evil for its own sake. But the daily coming forth of the sun from the Eastern gate of the walls which fence in the Egyptian paradise gives us a clue which must be carefully followed out, if we would really trace and understand the growth of thought and of religious belief on this whole subject. The Egyptian paradise was in the East; the Hellenic paradise was in the West. The variation points to no radical difference of conception. The bright flush of the morning sky is as beautiful as the glory of

the sunset hour; and we have to examine the language used of both before we can determine how far the two conceptions correspond and come from the same source. It is, indeed, impossible to read the descriptions which Pindar gives of Elysium without seeing and feeling that they are drawn from those manifestations of perfect loveliness, purity, and splendour which come with the rising or the setting of the sun. But the Western radiance comes when the day is done; and, so far, a paradise in the West is better suited for those who have rested from the toil of their earthly life. The abodes of the blessed are golden islands sailing on a sea of blue, and these islands are the burnished clouds floating in the pure ether as the sun goes down. From the tranquil peace of this sunset hour all anxiety and fear are banished, and so the blissful company gathered in that far Western land "inherit a tearless eternity." No doubt the imagination of the poet comes in to give shape and colour to the details; but the very fidelity with which his details reflect the phenomena of sundown shows the potency of the mythological factor in the future development of religious belief. The inferences drawn from the mere continued life of the dead, with the continuance of old habits and appetites, resulted, as we have seen, in wholesale

murder. The diverting of the mind from this horrible carnality to the phenomena of the outward world led to a marvellous exaltation of the character and the condition of the good; but it led also in the end to a tremendous intensifying of the horrors which fell to the portion of the bad. In Pindar's Elysian fields there is nothing that can degrade or defile; but what spot or stain can be seen on the deep-blue ocean of the Western heaven as the sun goes down? In that serene glory the islands of the blessed seem to repose for ever. All the forms seen there exhibit the perfection of beauty; but what unseemly forms can mar the brightness of that golden home to which the sun seems to be hastening, and which directly suggests the radiance of a sun which can never go down? Having advanced thus far, the mind of the poet moves onwards with giant strides, and we have to remember that it is the mind of the poet which is the real teacher and guide of his countrymen. His eye sees the beauty of the violet fields. Can, then, any except the pure in heart, the truthful, and the generous be suffered to tread them? But the exclusion of those who are not such implies a judgment; and how can the characters and lives of men be tested except by judges who can weigh the thoughts and intents of the heart? Thus every

soul, before it could enter that joyous land, had to undergo an impartial scrutiny before the august tribunal of Minos and Rhadamanthys. These names are evidence of a connection between the mythological or theological systems of the East and the West; and obviously we have here a point of departure which may carry us into regions purely moral. The poet was content to picture to himself for the blissful Elysian conditions, which show with sufficient clearness the source whence his conceptions sprang. He could dwell on the meeting of Odysseus and Laertes, on the forgiveness of old wrongs, on the reconciliation of deadly feuds as the hand of Hektor is clasped in the hand of the hero who slew him. He could speak of Helen, "pardoned and purified," as the bride of the short-lived yet long-suffering Achilles. There had been loss and partings; there is now restoration and re-union; but from first to last the imagery is solar, and the beings to whom it is applied are solar also. The idea was purely physical, yet it suggested the thoughts of trial, atonement, and purification; and the human mind having advanced thus far, could not fail to make its way from these conceptions to those golden lessons which Plato puts into the mouth of Socrates while awaiting the return of the theoric ship from Delos.

It is very necessary to mark both the definiteness and indefiniteness of the Greek beliefs with regard to the world unseen. For those who on earth had done great things, or who might be counted among the really good and noble of mankind (and for these alone), there were the asphodel meadows of Elysium; and for those who in tyranny, cruelty, or other forms of wickedness stood out prominently among their fellows (but for these alone) there was the hopeless prison of Tartaros. It is possible that for the Greek the creation of a place of utter darkness for abandoned sinners was a moral or theological, rather than a mythical, necessity. But however this may be, the pictures of this miserable abode are very faintly and vaguely drawn; while the main point is that for the vast mass of mankind, for the immense majority who live only the "common life of all men," there was access neither to Elysium nor to Tartaros. In all this we can trace a strictly moral development. But there were other factors in the growth of more modern beliefs which at the outset were not moral at all, but which have succeeded in gaining something like an imperial sway over the mind of Christendom generally. In the lands watered by the Indus and the Ganges the thoughts of men were necessarily occupied with operations and changes

in the physical world which did not so force themselves in the thoughts of the Greek or Latin. The Hindu sowed his seed, and generally he reaped his harvest; but his doing so depended on the success of a tremendous battle which was yearly fought out before his eyes. There are alternations of light and darkness everywhere; and the history of incidents in the birth, actions, sufferings, and death of the daily sun shaped itself into the great epics of the Western world. But in addition to these changes the Aryan conquerors in the Indian Peninsula were vitally interested in another struggle to which they came, more or less obscurely, to attach a spiritual meaning. This mighty drama brought before them the conflict of the Light-god Indra with the enemy who had stolen away his cattle, or, in other words, had shut up the treasures of the rain for which the thirsty earth was yearning. The god and his adversary are both spoken of under a multitude of names; but in every word we have the contrast between the beaming god of the heaven, with his golden locks and his flashing spear (the lightning), and the sullen demon who lurks within his hidden caves, drinking the milk of the stolen cattle. In its simplest form, this fight is nothing more than a struggle to gain possession of the rain-clouds. But its incidents are gradually exhibited

under a different aspect, and the enemy assumes a definite and thoroughly hateful character, as Ahi—the throttling snake of darkness, the very word which we still retain in the term "sin." Throughout the hymns of the Rig-Veda two images stand out before us with overpowering distinctness—on the one side the bright god of the heaven, beneficent and irresistible; on the other, the demon of darkness, as false and treacherous as he is malignant. This great enemy is pre-eminently Vritra, the thief who hides away the rainclouds; he is also Vala, the adversary, and Pani, the seducer, who reappears in Paris, the seducer of Helen. But in all that is said of both, there is nothing to show that the Aryan Hindu in the land of the Five Streams ever lost sight of the physical character of the struggle. In every case the image present to his mind was that of the lightning hurled into the pitchy black cloud masses to let loose the imprisoned waters. The demon is hateful, malignant, treacherous, and merciless; but he is the demon who has his fastnesses in the clouds—he is the prince of the powers of the air. The struggle between him and Indra is the struggle between the Kronid gods and the Titans, which in the Hesiodic Theogony Zeus himself admits to be one for sovereignty or subjection, for life or death. So in some Vedic hymns

we have the expressions of a wish that the wicked Vritra may not be suffered to reign over the worshippers of Indra; but both among the Greeks and the Hindus, this is all that we can cite by way of symptoms of that marvellous change which on Iranian soil converted this myth of Vritra into a religion and a philosophy. So completely is the system thus developed invested with a spiritual or metaphysical character, that we might be tempted to question the identity of Vritra and Ahriman, were it not that an identity of names and attributes runs through the Vedic and Iranian myths which makes doubt impossible. The Vritrahan, Vritra's bane, of the Hindu, becomes the Verethragna of the Zendavesta, as in the latter the Trita, Yama, and Krisaspa of the Veda become Yima-Kshaêta, Thraêtana, and Keresaspa, while all three reappear as the Feridun, Jemshid, and Garshasp of the modern Persian epic of the Shahnameh. The fact of the genealogy is thus removed beyond the reach of question, and further search only helps us to complete the links. To the Hindu, as we have seen, Vritra, the thief, was also familiarly known as Ahi, the choking snake; and Ahi on Iranian ground becomes Azi-dahâka, the biter, as in Hellas he becomes Echidna. But the struggle which in India is through the whole period of Vedic

literature a fight to set free the stolen or pent-up waters, is between Thraêtana and Azi-dahâka, the Zohak of the Shahnameh, a contest strictly between a good and an evil being. The myth had received a definite moral turn, and it suggested a series of conflicts between the like opposing powers which culminated in the eternal warfare of Ormuzd and Ahriman. We have nothing of this in India. If Dyu, Indra, or the other bright gods had their enemies, these enemies were manifestly physical; and there is nothing in the phraseology of the Vedic hymns to lead us to the notion that they looked upon any evil power as having an independent or self-created existence. But on Persian soil the word Verethragna, transparent in its meaning to the worshippers of Indra, so thoroughly lost its original sense that it came to denote mere strength or power, and was used as a simple adjective; and as the power opposed to the righteous God must be a moral one, a series of synonyms were employed which imparted to the representative of the Vedic Vritra more and more of a spiritual character. In the hymns of the Rig-Veda the Devas are bright beings who fight on the side of Indra: in the Avesta they are evil spirits, and the Zoroastrian was bound to renounce their worship. In this class of malignant beings were placed Verethra and all

his kin, under the designation of Drukhs, or deceitful. In the Western world, Verethra is still familiarly known under the name Ahriman, that is, Angro-Mainyus, or spirit of darkness, an epithet which was simply an offset to that of his righteous adversary, Spento-Mainyus, or the spirit of light. But Spento-Mainyus was only another name for the supreme Being, whose name Ahuro-mazdâo is better known to us in the shortened form of Ormuzd. In this Being the Zoroastrian believed with all the strength of spiritual conviction; and the exaltation of Ormuzd carried the greatness of Ahriman to a pitch which made him the creator and the sovereign of an evil universe at war with the Kosmos of the Spirit of light and truth.

We have thus before us the full development of Iranian dualism; and with this dualism the Jews were brought into contact during their exile in Babylonia. To ascribe to the Jews as a people up to this time any tendency to monotheism is simply to throw over our eyes a veil which must effectually prevent our seeing the facts of the case and involve us in a labyrinth of errors. Unless the Hebrew prophets were from first to last mistaken, they were merely a few voices crying out in the wilderness of a sensual, corrupt, and cruel idolatry. The religion of the Hebrew people, as distinguished from

that of their prophets, down to the Babylonish captivity, was the religion of Phœnicians, Canaanites, and Assyrians; and in their exile they showed the force of old habit in their readiness to adopt the Zoroastrian demonology, which connected Satan with the prince of the devils, the source of wicked thoughts. The victory of the Iranian theology was thus complete. Henceforth the Jewish mind was possessed with the notion of two hierarchies, the one heavenly, the other diabolical; and this notion acquired increased strength in the earlier ages of the Christian era. The nations which became Christian had filled the world with gods and demons, each with his own special sphere and office. These deities the Christian teachers dethroned; but far from attempting to destroy them, they were careful to insist that they had always been, and must for ever continue to be, malignant devils. But unless their fellowship was to come to an end, they must be under the rule of some king; and this king was found in the Semitic Satan. The theology which sprang from this root endowed the king of the fallen angels with the powers of omnipresence and omniscience, and made him succeed in wresting from the righteous God against whom he fought all but an insignificant fraction of the whole race of mankind.

But when Christian missionaries came to deal with the Teutonic nations, they found themselves in contact with tribes who had never been influenced by Iranian dualism, and had never even been drawn in this direction. The idea of one malignant spirit marring and undoing the work of God was wholly foreign to their minds; and although the teaching of the priesthood might exhibit the severity of that of Augustine or Fulgentius, it was met by a passive resistance not soon or easily overcome. But probably not one of the phrases which furnished the groundwork of Iranian dualism had been wholly forgotten by any of the Aryan tribes. These phrases had varied in character from grave solemnity to comedy or burlesque, and to the people at large, if we are to judge from their folk tales, the latter mode of thinking and speaking on the subject was more congenial. Hel, whose name we have adopted to denote the abode of the wicked dead, had been, like Persephone, simply the queen of the unseen land, which, in the ideas of the northern tribes, was a land of bitter cold and icy walls. She now became not the queen of Niflheim, but Niflheim itself, while her home, though gloomy enough, was not quite without material comforts. It became the hell where the old man hews wood for the

Christmas fire, and where the devil, in his eagerness to buy the flitch of bacon, yields up the marvellous quern which is good to grind almost anything. It was not so pleasant a place indeed as heaven, or the old Valhalla; but it was better to be there than shut out in the outer cold beyond its padlocked gates. The devil was, moreover, a being who under pressure of hunger might be drawn into acting against his own interest. In other words, he might be outwitted, and was actually outwitted, to his own destruction. This character of a poor or stupid devil is almost the only one exhibited in Teutonic legends.

But Satan, the Devil, Ahi, Vritra are all malignant beings; and if to this malignity be added the powers ascribed to the Iranian Ahriman, and the Jewish Satan, we see before us the foundation on which all the descriptions of hell given in any age of Christianity may most easily be raised. We have seen that the unformed mind even of primitive man gave expression to a certain moral feeling in assigning dyspepsia hereafter as a penalty for the stealer of food here, and foulness of breath as the recompense of the scandalmonger. It can scarcely be said that clergy of the English Church have advanced much further when they can speak to their people of the devils as seizing and torturing

"the drunkard by the instrument of his intemperance, the lustful man by the instrument of his lust, the tyrant by the instrument of his tyranny." In the belief and practice of purely savage tribes there are not a few things which may find a true explanation in some theory of degeneracy; and there are also in the convictions, or alleged convictions, of the most advanced and civilised races many points which may carry us back directly to the rudest forms of savage thought. The Greek had his paradise for the high and heroic among mankind, and his Tartaros for those who had been guilty of colossal crimes; but all others passed into a land of shadows. Of any notion of purgatorial sufferings which should fit these feeble ghosts for a better or happier existence beyond, we find no trace, unless we are to find it in the case of those of whom Socrates speaks as cast forth from Tartaros, and as finally delivered from it when they have received forgiveness from the victims of their crimes. This is, indeed, a vastly higher conception than that of the hell to which certain Christian teachers seem so partial; for if the Socratic Tartaros resounds with the wail of the wicked, it echoes the cry of anguish and sorrow, not of malignant and murderous fury. We have to betake ourselves first to the East to find "the hideous

inventory of torture—caldrons of boiling oil and liquid fire, black dungeons and rivers of filth, vipers and vultures and cannibals, thorns and spears, and red-hot pincers, and whips of flames;"[1] and then from the East we have to come back to the West if we would see the horrors of these awful abodes intensified a thousandfold. Here the pictures of Christian teachers represent the dwellers in hell as glaring and staring with "the fierce, fiery eyes of hate, spite, frenzied rage—yells of blaspheming, concentrated hate echoing along the lurid vaults, every one hating every one." Here also amidst these multitudes from whom all restraint has been removed, the same teachers have placed the truant schoolgirl, the refined and sensitive poet, the unbelieving philosopher, and even babes who have died unbaptized.

In all such teaching there may be a good motive, but in what we may call the Evolution of thought, it is the survival of a barbarous belief; nor if we multiply instances of such teaching to any extent do we make any real additions to our knowledge. In the same way the pictures drawn by Pindar of the asphodel meadows and the pure life of the blessed in Elysium, carry us as far in the development of thought as the more highly wrought

[1] Tylor, "Primitive Culture," ii., 89.

pictures of the "Urbs beata, vera pacis visio, Jerusalem." Both in the one and in the other there is, beyond doubt, a moral purpose; but both point to a further stage. That stage, as we said at starting, is marked by the convictions and the hope of St. Paul; and if we may reason from the history of the past to that of the future, the course of Evolution hereafter will exhibit the process by which the belief of an almost solitary thinker shall become the conviction of the world.

Of the Divine purpose in all this we need here say nothing. Neither the theory nor the facts of Evolution call upon us in any way to disavow it, and we are therefore at full liberty to maintain the reality of this Divine purpose, the fact of this Divine education of the world. I do maintain it now; and I do so because "Evolution" can never be anything more than the description of a process; and although so long as we only describe a process we are precluded from passing any opinion on its cause or its issue, we are free, when this task is done, to see what grounds we may have for forming a judgment both as to cause and issue.

XII.

HAS EVOLUTION A CLAIM TO A PLACE IN THE CHRISTIAN SYSTEM?

By the Rev. A. F. MUIR, M.A.

THE doctrine of Evolution is "in the air." It is distinctly formulated and explicitly adopted in some form or other by the majority of scientists and a large proportion of Christian theologians, and is rapidly forming the habit of thought of the educated and intelligent public. As yet, it is true, its influence is only partial; as yet its claim to constitute a "formula of the universe" cannot, even by its most enthusiastic advocates, be said to have been fully made out. A considerable variety of theories group themselves under it, and it is probable that a much greater variety has yet to spring up. But that it represents, with more or less exactitude, a true principle according to which the

phenomena of the universe manifest themselves, the vast consensus of opinion amongst competent and careful thinkers in almost every department of investigation would seem to place beyond question. It has now to be considered whether the time has not arrived when the doctrine of Evolution, so far as established by science, should be recognised in Christian teaching. The writers of the preceding papers, however they may differ amongst themselves in the degree in which they commit themselves to the general standpoint of Evolution, and in the mode in which they would prefer to formulate it as a law of Nature, are evidently agreed that a very high probability attaches to it, that it is a key to vast regions of the visible universe, and that it contains nothing essentially antagonistic to "the faith once delivered to the saints."

If, however, a place is to be secured for the doctrine amongst the *credibilia* of Christianity, it can only be by sharply distinguishing between its essence and its accidents. Mr. Herbert Spencer's definition is perhaps the most general form in which the law can be expressed, namely, "a change from incoherent homogeneity to coherent heterogeneity, accompanying the dissipation of motion and the

integration of matter." Its simplest illustration would, perhaps, be found in the nebular hypothesis, as applied to the question of the origin and resolution of planets. But it is chiefly upon a higher plane than that of mere inorganic matter that the law begins to assume a practical, it may almost be said a painful, interest to us. I must quote from representative writers, as it is of importance that we should deal with exact statements, and not with loose, popular conceptions of what they mean. Prof. Huxley says (*Encycl. Brit.*, 9th ed., Art. "Evolution") :—"Evolution or development is, in fact, at present employed in biology as a general name for the history of the steps by which any living being has acquired the morphological and the physiological characters which distinguish it."

In this connection the natural history of the *germ* is of great consequence. Investigation in this direction has cast a strong light upon the question of the emergence of higher from lower forms of life. Huxley defines a germ thus :— "*Matter potentially alive, and having within itself the tendency to assume a definite living form.*" And he adds :—"In all cases the process of Evolution consists in a succession of changes of the form, structure, and functions of the germ, by

which it passes, step by step, from an extreme simplicity, or relative homogeneity, of invisible structure to a greater or less degree of complexity or heterogeneity; and the course of progressive differentiation is usually accompanied by growth, which is affected by intussusception." This last term is opposed to "accretion"—the method by which stones, for instance, may be said to "grow."

When thus stated, the principle or process of Evolution would appear, so far as its theological aspect is concerned, to be all but perfectly neutral, and to deserve the epithet "atheous," which the Bishop of Carlisle has so happily applied to physical science in general.[1] But it is unfortunate that some of the most distinguished advocates of the theory have been influenced by an unmistakable,

[1] "We want a new word to express the fact that all physical science, properly so called, is compelled by its very nature to take no account of the being of God; as soon as it does this it trenches upon theology, and ceases to be physical science. If I might coin a word, I should say that science was *atheous*, and therefore could not be *atheistic;* that is to say, its investigations and reasonings are by argument conversant simply with observed facts and conclusions drawn from them, and in this sense it is *atheous*, or without God. And because it is so, it does not in any way trench upon *theism* or *theology*, which cannot be *atheistic*, or in the condition of denying the being of God."—"God and Nature," *Nineteenth Century*, by the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Carlisle.

a scarcely concealed bias, to drive its application beyond the limits of strictly ascertained facts. With Huxley, Haeckel, Tyndall, and others this has been notoriously the case. Of the several conceptions of Evolution that betray an anti-theological attitude, the following are especially deserving of attention: (1) that which maintains that the principle is the master key to the entire universe, and (2) that which attributes to Evolution as such an intrinsic power of determining the process it is usually considered only to describe; in other words, which views Evolution as a *force* and not merely as a *law* (*i.e.*, "a notation of observed uniformity in the occurrence of phenomena"). These two extensions of the doctrine in the present state of our knowledge are not verifiable, and therefore must be pronounced unscientific and illegitimate. In no case ought they to be taken into account in considering the bearings of the theory upon theology and religion. Mr. Darwin himself, as is well known, refused to allow that his theory precluded the conception of an original creation; Mr. Spencer is exceedingly cautious in his application of it, and, however he may personally lean to the view that vital forms were originally derivable from sub-vital ones, he refuses to pronounce as to either

the first origin of life or "the dawn of mental life;" and Mr. Alfred Russell Wallace, the co-discoverer of this law (to quote Mr. Sully's words),[1] "differs from Darwin in setting much narrower limits to the action of this cause[2] in the mental as well as the physical domain. Thus he would mark off the human faculty of making abstractions, such as space and time, as powers which could not have been evolved in this way." And, as we have all heard, he "leans to the theological idea of some superior principle which has guided man in his upward path, as well as controlled the whole process of organic evolution."

To the labours, dialectic skill, philosophic culture, and, more than all, to the open-mindedness of such men as Wallace, St. George Mivart, and J. J. Murphy we owe it, that at this stage of the question it is possible for us to hold, and triumphantly to maintain, such a view of Evolution as is not opposed, on the one hand, to the essential doctrines of revelation, nor, on the other, to the facts and warrantable inductions of modern science. With such authorities to support us, Haeckel's gross, atheistic materialism, Huxley's agnosticism, and

[1] Art. "Evolution," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9th ed.

[2] "The action of this *cause*." This is but one of many instances in works on natural and mental science betraying the influence of the fallacy (2) above alluded to.

even the vehement denials and disclaimers of theologians, who would fain monopolise orthodoxy, may be calmly discounted. The first of these claims for the Kantian or La Place cosmological gas theory "that it is purely monistic, and entirely excludes every supernatural process, and prearranged and conscious action of a personal creator." Huxley says:—"No truths brought to light by biological investigation were better calculated to inspire distrust of the dogmas intruded upon science in the name of theology than those which relate to the distribution of animals and plants on the surface of the earth;" and Mr. James Sully, whose article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* far outweighs Professor Huxley's in scientific importance, gives it as his view, that "Evolution simply eliminates the notion of creation from those regions of existence to which it is applied." And many Christian thinkers interpret the doctrine as a negation of the great First Cause, and believe that to apply it to the problems of man's moral and spiritual nature would result in reducing the conception of *sin* to that of a "merely temporary incident of his transition from a less perfect to a more perfect state."

But it is noteworthy that these criticisms are pertinent only when Evolution is regarded as

taking place solely according to material laws. This one view of it is made to dominate the whole realm of existence. Yet to such a limitation the admissions of Evolutionists of the physical school are fatal. Huxley's great discovery of "Bathybius" as the link between the living and the non-living universe has resolved itself into moonshine; and as for the structural continuity of man with the ape, Professor Dana says:—"No remains bear evidence to less perfect erectness of structure than in civilised man, or to any nearer approach to the man-ape in essential characteristics."[1] And Mr. Sully points out, concerning the theory as a whole, that "as a *verifying generalisation* it is clearly limited by the fact of the correlation of *mental* and *physical* evolution. These two regions of phenomena may be seen to manifest the same law, yet they cannot be identified. All the laws of physical evolution can never help us to understand the first genesis of mind; and this difficulty is in no way reduced by Mr. Spencer's conception of a perfect gradation from purely physical to conscious life. The dawn of the first confused and shapeless feeling

[1] *Geology*, p. 603. Even Tyndall acknowledges that "here yawns an immense gap which it is impossible to bridge over." And Darwin confesses the absence of traces of the "intermediate varieties" in geological strata.—*Origin of Species*, p. 138.

is as much a "mystery" as the genesis of a distinct sensation. Our best exponents of evolution fully recognise this difficulty."[1]

[1] *Encyc. Brit.* Compare the following corroborative testimonies:—"I regard 'vitality' as a power of a peculiar kind, exhibiting no analogy whatever to any known forces. It cannot be a property of matter, because it is in all respects essentially different in its actions from all acknowledged properties of matter. The vital property belongs to a different category altogether."—Sir Lionel Beale, *Protoplasm.*

"If a material element, or a combination of a thousand material elements, in a molecule are alike unconscious, it is impossible for us to believe that the mere addition of one, two, or a thousand other material elements, to form a more complex molecule, could in any way tend to produce a self-conscious existence. Either all matter is conscious, or consciousness is something distinct from matter; and in the latter case its presence in material forms is a proof of the existence of conscious beings outside of, and independent of, what we term matter."—A. R. Wallace, *Contributions to the Theory of Natural Selection.*

"No one has ever yet built up one particle of living matter out of lifeless elements; every living creature, from the simplest dweller on the confines of organisation up to the highest and most complete organism, has its origin in pre-existent living matter."—Huxley, Art. "Biology," in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9th ed.

A writer in the *Journal of Science* thus attempts to explain those *lacunæ*:—

"On the evolutionary view it may be fairly contended, that the circumstances under which the raw elements have been produced may have been of infrequent occurrence as compared with those under which the common simple bodies are developed. To the objection that we never find any elementary substances changing their nature, or reverting to the primordial state of matter,—an objection which reminds us of the cavil that we never see a man reverting to an ape,—it may be replied, that under given conditions matter has reached forms which are stable, and that none of the original raw material remains."—*Journal of Science*, vol. iv. p. 4.

In fact, the simple truth of the matter is just this, that however fascinating the dictum, *Natura non habet saltum*, may be, there are observable certain breaks in the chain of being, the links required to connect which have hitherto evaded the most diligent search. And although the theological interpretation of these may be sneered at as the invoking of a *deus ex machinâ*, and the explaining of the unknown by that which is still more unknown, it may be doubted whether this extremity of science is not a providentially arranged opportunity for religion. Explain it as we may, these breaks divide the phenomena under consideration into several planes of existence distinct from one another, viz., the *inorganic*, the *organic* or physical, the *mental*, and the *spiritual*, on each of which we see the law of Evolution freely working, but its processes in any one of these cannot be adequately translated into terms of the others. There are, that is to say, several vast continuities of being rather than one in the universe of which we are cognisant. But whilst beyond this not an iota of evidence is discoverable, within these limits the evidence is not simply sufficient, it is overwhelming. As representative scientific authorities for the unbridgableness of the intervals between these areas of phenomena, it is sufficient

to cite Huxley,[1] Herbert Spencer,[2] and St. George Mivart.[3]

[1] "The present state of knowledge," says Huxley, "furnishes us with no link between the living and the not-living," although he concedes that "if the hypothesis of evolution (*i.e.*, as a *universal principle*) be true, living matter must have arisen from not-living matter."—Art. "Biology," in *Encyclopædia Britannica.*

[2] Speaking of the biogenesis theory, he says:—"That creatures having *quite specific structures* are evolved in a few hours, without antecedents calculated to determine their specific forms, is to me incredible. . . . My disbelief extends not only to the alleged case of 'spontaneous generation,' but to every case akin to them. The very conception of spontaneity is wholly incongruous with the conception of evolution. . . . Granting that the formation of organic matter and the evolution of life in its lowest forms may go on under existing cosmical conditions, but believing it more likely that the formation of such matter and such forms took place at a time when the heat of the earth's surface was falling through ranges of temperature at which higher organic compounds are unstable, I conceive that the moulding of such organic matter into the simplest types must have commenced with portions of protoplasm more minute, more indefinite, and more inconstant in their character than the lowest rhizopods, less distinguishable from a mere fragment of albumen than even the *Protogenes* of Professor Haeckel."—*Biology*, I., Appendix, 481.

Although Mr. Spencer attempts by minute subdivision of differences to render less marked the chasm between physical and conscious existence, yet he tells us that in the latter "there lies a class of facts absolutely without any perceptible or conceivable community of nature with" the former. "The truths here to be set down are truths of which the very elements are unknown to physical science."—*Psychology*, I. § 41. He seeks a "unit of consciousness," and imagines he has found it in a "sudden nerve shock." "Mind is certainly, in some cases, and probably in all, resolvable into nervous shocks" (!)—*Ibid.*, I. §§ 60, 61, 62.

[3] "Biology shows us that plants and animals cannot be separated by any hard-and-fast line which physical science can point out. There is no hiatus from the orang-outang to an alga or a fungus. The hiatus which does exist is that between the living and the not-

It has been generally supposed that the antagonism between the Biblical and the scientific view is at its strongest in the doctrines of Evolution and Creation. To what extent this impression has arisen from traditional and literalistic interpretations of the cosmogony in the first chapter of Genesis would be an interesting and profitable subject of inquiry. If the notable controversy in the pages of the *Nineteenth Century* for 1885–6 has produced no further result, it has at least demonstrated that an ancient book, penned in the very morning of the world, and embodying traditions from an even earlier dawning, is not to be appealed to in solution of scientific questions, and that *science is incompetent,* even through its ablest representatives, *to furnish an exhaustive theory of the origin of things.* Biblical criticism has long ago taught us to distinguish between the infallible accuracy of a Biblical document—especially in matters of scientific detail, when as yet science was unborn—and its substantial inspiration. It is not legitimate to appeal to the "nebular hypothesis" in support of the Biblical statements as to the

living; and however much we may be persuaded that that hiatus must have been bridged over at some period of evolution, all experiments and observations go to show the absolute distinctions between the living and the non-living now."—St. George Mivart, *Nature and Thought*, 174.

earlier phases of the natural world, as that hypothesis, fascinating as it confessedly is, is still *sub judice;* and palæontology, so far as its evidence can be intelligibly deciphered, witnesses to a different order in the first appearance of animal life upon the globe from that given by the pentateuchal writer;[1] and it is exceedingly difficult (as witness the ever-changing guesses of exegesis) to harmonise its *data* with the time he assigns to the making of the world and the distance in time, according to the best calculations of Biblical chronology, between that series of events and the present. "What we have to note,"—as Professor Drummond pertinently reminds us,—"is, that a scientific theory of the universe formed no part of the original writer's intention. Dating from the childhood of the world, written for children, and for that child-spirit in man which remains unchanged by time, it takes colour and shape accordingly. Its object is purely religious, the point being, not how certain things were made, but that God made them. It is not dedicated to science, but to the soul. It is a sublime theology, given in view of ignorance, or idolatry, or polytheism, telling the worshipful youth of the world that the heavens and the earth and

[1] In placing, for instance, the production of fruit-trees before the sun, and of birds before reptiles.

every creeping and flying thing were made by God."[1] Men forget—or at least have heretofore too much forgot—that the chief purpose of the pentateuchal writer was to convey a moral or religious conception of the universe, and that the survey of it which he takes is not a structural or internal one, such as the scientific expert of to-day might be able to take, but an external and popular one, such as the primitive mind might easily understand. It is the merest pedantry of science, therefore, for any one to demand of him the exact detail of a scientific treatise. He, equally with Professor Huxley, appealed to "the people of average opinion and capacity" in his day, and he realised his aim by his magnificent opening sentence, "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,*" by the presentation in general outline of a hierarchical scale or ascent of beings, and by the assertion of an all-pervading Divine purpose.[2]

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, Feb. 1886. "Mr. Gladstone and Genesis."

[2] "This (the nebular) hypothesis is not in itself necessarily atheistical, for the world might as well have been formed by God in this way as in any other. Indeed, I am free to confess that, could such a theory be established, it would tend to exalt instead of lowering my ideas of God as a God of order, and of the creation as a gradually developed and slowly unfolded artistic production. . . . All that we look for at the hands of science is to admit the analogical evidence which geology affords of a real and true beginning; and to satisfy the intellectual necessity, the imperative requirements of reason, by admitting that such a commencement there must have been, prepara-

It is likewise a great mistake to suppose, as Mr. Sully and so many others have done, that Creation and Evolution are mutually exclusive ideas. The most thoroughgoing doctrine of Evolution would not necessitate the abandonment of the belief that *the worlds have been framed by the word of God*, although it might have considerable influence in modifying the sense in which we accepted the Mosaic, Babylonian, or Persian cosmogony. Admitting the presumption to be a very natural one, that if the principle of Evolution appears to have done so much it might possibly have done the whole, it is yet well to remember that not only has Evolution not yet made good its claim to be the unifying principle of Nature, but that the intervals in the continuity of the latter have with a most significant persistency defied the efforts of the most careful investigators and skilled analysts to bridge them over; and that, moreover, even were that task achieved, Evolution knows no true beginning. Dr. James Martineau has justly denounced this attempt to disprove the necessity for creative agency as "a mere appeal to an incompetency in the human imagination, in virtue of which magni-

tory to the due reception of the sublime affirmation of inspiration—'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.'"—Rev. Hugh Macmillan's *Bible Teachings in Nature*, pp. 21–23.

tudes evading conception are treated as out of existence; and an aggregate of inappreciable increments is simultaneously equated—in its cause to *nothing*, in its effect to *the whole of things;*"[1] and the distinction he draws elsewhere—"Science discloses the method of the world, but not its cause; religion its cause, but not its method," is as useful as it is sound. As to the alleged incompatibility of the one theory with the other, a great deal must depend on the manner in which they are conceived. The minutest phase of transition from one condition to another condition in an evolutionary series is as mysterious and "unimaginable" as the greatest creative act; but neither of these, as George Henry Lewes has shown, is "unthinkable."[2] And whether with some[3] we reduce the function of the Creator to the performance of an "initiative act" at given moments in the evolutionary process; or with others find place for such a function by drawing a distinction between "*absolute* creation, such as must have taken place when the earliest definite kind of matter appeared," and "*derivative* or *potential*," "the creation by God of forms not *as existing*, but *in potentia*, to be subsequently evolved into

[1] *Essays Phil. and Theol.*, pp. 142, 178.

[2] *Problems of Life and Mind*, ii. 292. Comp. Mivart's *Lessons from Nature*, pp. 371–2.

[3] Pfleiderer, *Religionsphilosophie*, pp. 617–8; and Murphy, *The Scientific Bases of Faith*, p. 12.

actual existence by the due concurrency and agency of the various powers of nature"[1] or yet again by conceiving of the entire world-process as a continuous "externalising" of the will, thought, and life of an immanent Deity;[2] we are conscious that the one principle is as much as the other a necessary factor in the genesis of things. Even in the atomic theory of the universe, to which many leading exponents of physical science are strongly attracted—a proof of the vitality of the speculations of Democritus and of his distinguished disciple Leibnitz[3]—and which has been so closely associated with the Evolutionary theory,[4] there have to be assumed at the very outset, as Professor Clerk Maxwell demonstrated, "an infinite number of molecules exactly alike in size, weight, and rate of vibration;" and these primeval atoms "have all the appearance of manufactured articles." What prescient knowledge, what skill and power, would be required for the creation of these, the "foundation stones" of the visible universe! In any case, therefore, our conception of

[1] St. George Mivart (after Augustine and Aquinas), *Lessons from Nature*, p. 419.

[2] Akin to Spencer's theory of the relation of the universe to the "Unknown and Unknowable," and in harmony with neo-Berkeleyanism and the chief phases of modern thought.

[3] *Vide* his *Monadologie*.

[4] Mr. Herbert Spencer takes the atomic theory as the foundation of his physical system.

the Author of things and beings is not impaired, but rather infinitely enhanced. We are not compelled to think of "an absentee God, sitting, ever since the first Sabbath, on the outside of His creation, seeing it go,"[1] but of a being "of whom, through whom, and in whom are all things," and whose Spirit is the "veritable soul of the universe," always and instantly present to those who seek Him. "What the atmosphere is to the physical life," says Dr. Joseph Cook, "that the sense of the Divine Omnipresence is to secret prayer."

It has been supposed, but I think without sufficient reason, that all "design" arguments will be destroyed if the hypothesis of Evolution be accepted. That they will require to be seriously modified is certain. As hitherto formulated they can apply to a universe only as static, not as constituting a dynamical system. "For the notion that every organism has been created as it is, and launched straight at a purpose, Mr. Darwin substitutes the conception of something which may fairly be termed a method of trial and error. Organisms vary incessantly. Of these variations the few meet with surrounding conditions which suit them, and thrive; the many are unsuited, and become extinguished. According to teleology,

[1] Carlyle.

each organism is like a rifle-bullet fired straight at a mark; according to Darwin, organisms are like grape-shot, of which one hits something, and the rest fall wide. . . . Far from imagining that cats exist *in order* to catch mice well, Darwinism supposes that cats exist *because* they catch mice well; mousing being not the *end*, but the *condition* of their existence.[1]

[1] *Lay Sermons*, pp. 301–303. Compare Dr. Wilson's argument (*Chapters in Evolution*, 152):—

"Why under the down-covered body of the moth, and under the hard wing-cases of the beetle, should there be discovered the same number of divisions as in the calcareous framework of the lobster? It cannot be by *chance* that there exist just twenty segments in all these hundreds of thousands of species. There is no reason to think it was *necessary*, in the sense that no other number would have made a possible organism. And to say that it is the result of *design*, to say the Creator followed this pattern throughout, merely for the purpose of maintaining the pattern, is to assign a motive which, if avowed by a human being, we should call whimsical." Lewes is even more explicit:—

"But if we are to admit the human point of view, a glance at the facts of embryology must produce very uncomfortable reflections. For what should we say of an architect who was unable, or obstinately unwilling, to erect a palace except by first using his materials in the shape of a hut, then pulling them down and rebuilding them as a cottage, then adding storey to storey, and room to room, *not* with any reference to the ultimate purposes of the palace, but wholly with reference to the way in which houses were constructed in ancient times? . . . Yet this is the sort of succession on which organisms are constructed. The embryo is nothing like the miniature of the adult. For a long while the body, in its entirety and in its details, presents the strangest of spectacles. Day by day and hour by hour the aspect of the scene changes, and this instability is exhibited by the most essential parts no less than by the accessory

Whilst acknowledging that there is a certain measure of justice in the distinction the great physiologist here makes, I cannot help suspecting that the greater portion of it is sheer logomachy. As he puts the case, there seems to be an antithesis somewhere, but when it is examined it resolves itself into thin air. The argument for contrivance is strengthened rather than otherwise, if, instead of supposing an instantaneous creation of an organism for a certain end, we suppose its continued existence dependent upon its fulfilling that end, especially when in relation to its environment we find that its history has been one of ever-increasing adaptation towards doing so. It is only by confining the attention to individual moments of differentiation and ignoring general tendency that intelligent purpose can be lost sight of, and such statements as that "Evolution supplies no explanation of the universe" can be maintained by intelligent men. But it is said, "Generalise the facts and they explain themselves, so far as there is any room for explanation; all beyond that is the unintelligible and the unknowable." Not so! "Generalise the facts" and they demand an explanation

parts. One would say that Nature feels her way, and only reaches the goal after many times missing the path."—*Problems of Life and Mind.*

in terms of purposive operation. The admission by Evolutionists, even of the mechanical school, that nature is a system of forces tending gradually to realise the perfection of function and the ascent of being is all that is needed for the triumphant vindication of a great "first cause," whether at the beginning or in the midst of things. That nature is a gigantic aggregate of "opportunisms," "lucky chances," and "unintelligible accidents" is a conception which only requires to be stated in order to its being absolutely and finally rejected.[1]

This system of processes we call the universe is not, however, to be judged of as we should judge of a normal and healthy system. *Moral evil* is to be recognised as present in it, and as largely the cause of the difficulty, the "groaning and travail," discernible in its operation. For this its original authorship and its ground-plan are not to be condemned; it is incidental to free-agency, and immediately traceable to a principle or being antagonistic to its rightful king. To this malevolent force is conceivably due the waste, the delay, and the misery which are so generally observable. But as to the first of these flaws in the operation of Evolution (to which Mr. Lewes

[1] See the remarkable statements of Mr. Wallace, *Natural Selection*, p. 368, and Professor Owen, *Anatomy of Vertebrates*, ch. xl.

draws attention), it is largely, if not entirely, compensated for by the law of the conservation of energy, and the availableness of the atoms which have been set free from one aggregate or organism for use in others. That an all-powerful, all-wise, and absolute Agent could have attained His ends by more immediate exercise of power or will is conceivable; but even apart from the hindering presence of moral evil in the cosmos, it is by no means evident that such an absolute, instantaneous method would be the best for the ends He has in view. As a revelation of God the *process* may be of incalculably greater value than the *result* taken by itself. There are apparent, also, educative and redemptive elements in the universal order, and so predominant is the tendency to higher states and conditions, that even the "laws of Nature" minister to the unhappiness of the wicked, and the gradual reduction of moral evil to impotence and nothingness, and pain becomes an important factor in working out ultimate well-being and happiness.[1] This tendency to ameliorate is visible not only in the physical realm, but in the social, political, and religious history of the human race.

There is another consideration that deserves notice: are there not evidences that the Author of

[1] See James Hinton's *Mystery of Pain*.

the universe has a serene joy in realising His wisdom, power, and beneficence in finite forms, material adaptations, and physical and conscious natures? Because a creature of God does not happen to be the "fittest," and therefore is doomed not to "survive," it does not follow that its existence is utterly futile, or that it is not justified by a certain preponderance of pleasure over pain, a faint reflection or communication of the blessedness of Him who has called it into being. Mr. B. Carlill's most interesting and convincing article in the current number (June 1887) of the *Nineteenth Century*, "Are Animals Mentally Happy?" deserves thoughtful consideration as bearing on this question.

As for the charge of "fatalism" which has been so freely brought against Evolution, it is obvious that such a thing could only exist in a uniformly materialistic system, not in one presenting several planes of continuity, each embracing phenomena in certain essentials peculiar to itself.

How comes it that the outlook of Christian Evolutionists is so bright and hopeful? If others "faint and are weary," they at least are not so. They are conscious rather of the removal of a great incubus, and of a simple and natural "reconciliation of science with religion." In the present number of the *Fortnightly* (June 1887) Mr. John

Addington Symonds, in an article that might almost be styled secular, states it as his conviction, that "the main fact in the intellectual development of the last half-century" has been "the restoration of spirituality to our thoughts about the universe," and that "the conceptions of God and law tend to coalesce in the scientific theory of the universe. In other words, spirituality is restored to Nature, which comes to be regarded as a manifestation of infinite vitality." Another writer may be quoted, whose words more nearly express the Christian interpretation of this experience. The Rev. Dr. Munger says:—"Evolution, properly considered, not only does not put God at a distance, nor obscure His form behind the order of Nature, but draws Him nearer, and even goes far towards breaking down the walls of mystery that shut Him out from human vision. In other words, in Evolution we see a *revelation* of God, while in previous theories of creation we had only an *assertion* of God."[1]

A word or two with respect to another aspect of the question. Whilst there has been shown to be no serious antagonism between the theory in its catholic form and the doctrines of the Bible, there is much in it that throws a new light upon these

[1] *The Appeal to Life.*

doctrines, that alters our modes of conceiving them, and appears to support them with new sanctions. The relation of Christianity to the great natural or heathen religions of the world is invested with a new interest, and a fresh impulse has been given to those critical studies which have for their subject-matter the composition of the complex of works of various ages and characters we call the Bible. The Pentateuch, which Ewald styles "the Bible in miniature," is now demonstrated to be in itself not a simple but a highly composite work, and to lean upon traditions in existence long anterior to itself. And there is no book which so emphasizes development as a law of the spiritual realm as the Holy Scriptures. Rightly understood, the cosmology of Genesis and Christ's doctrine of the re-birth are assertions of Evolution. And there is a manifest dependence of the later and more spiritual upon the earlier and more strictly "natural" religious teaching of the Bible. The ideas of one religious movement are repeated in a higher sense, and in new applications, in that which succeeds; each of the moments of the cycle of revelation fulfilling its predecessor.

What a history is comprised in the mere utterance of the names of God *in serie*—Elohim—Jahveh —Our Father—Spirit—Love! The doctrine of

Sacrifice is the same and yet not the same in Genesis and in Hebrews; of *Law* in Deuteronomy and Romans; of *Atonement* in the rude Adamic altar and the final spiritual oblation of the Cross. *Faith*[1] is shown as a principle essential to and evolved through various diverse dispensations. *Law and grace*[2] are traced out in their interaction, in what may be called, for want of a better term, "the education of the race." And there are scattered up and down Holy Scripture hints of ultimate aims and ends which connect in sublime evolutionary order the fragmentary, discordant experiences of the race in regard to pain, sin, evil, separation, schism, and death. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to over-estimate the place which evolutionary conceptions occupy in the anthropology of St. Paul. He describes *Regeneration*[3] as a process of transformation dating from an initial act of faith; and in speaking of the *Resurrection*[4] he refers to it as a *change*—a passage or transition from the "natural" to the "spiritual" in which identity, personal continuity, is not destroyed but

[1] Rom. iv. 5, 11, 13, 16, 20; x. 8; Heb. xi. 1, 6, 9; vi. 11; xi. 3, 11, 28, 33, 39, &c.

[2] John i. 17; Rom. ii. 14; iii. 20, 21; viii. 2; x. 4; Gal. ii. 19; iii. 24, &c.

[3] Rom. viii. 18–23, 29; xii. 2; Eph. iv. 20–24, &c.

[4] 1 Cor. xv. 35–54.

only sublimated. And in his forecast of the future of the race there is no trace of the poor pessimism which Schopenhauer borrowed from Buddhism, or which darkens with its shadow the latest visions of our Laureate :—

> "Evolution ever climbing after some ideal good,
> And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the mud."

But as with St. John he spoke of the "manifestation of the sons of God," and of "the holy city, the New Jerusalem," in which the civic dreams of the ages should be fulfilled, so as Apostle of the Gentiles he looked forth with ardent soul to the era when we all shall have attained "unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13).

THE END.

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